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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

INFORMATION SOURCES OF PURCHASERS OF SELECTED
HOME FURNISHING TEXTILE PRODUCTS

by

LENA HORNE



A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

CLOTHING AND TEXTILES
FACULTY OF HOME ECONOMICS

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1980

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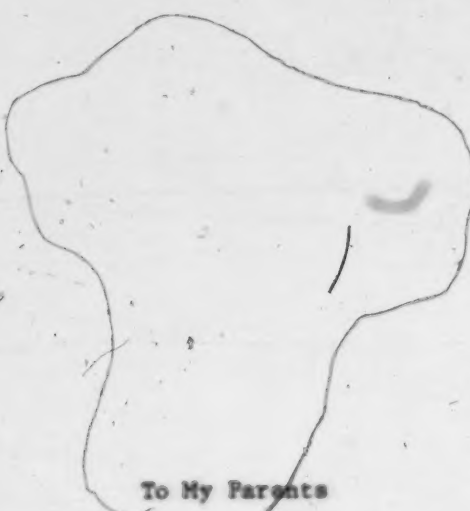
The undersigned certify that they have read, and
recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research,
for acceptance, a thesis entitled Information Sources of
Purchasers of Selected Home Furnishing Textile Products
submitted by Lena Horne in partial fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science in
Clothing and Textiles.

...Betty Cason
Supervisor

...Theodore Brown

Judith Marshall
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Date. April 9, 1980



To My Parents

For a Privilege They Never Had

Abstract

Information Sources of Purchasers of Selected Home Furnishing
Textile Products

by

Lena Horne, Master of Science

University of Alberta, 1980

Professor: Dr. Elizabeth Crown

Faculty of Home Economics

Division: Clothing and Textiles

The purpose of this study was to examine sources of information that buyers use in the purchase of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. The Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) consumer behavior model was the conceptual framework of the study. A questionnaire was sent to 1,000 residents of the Province of Alberta in the fall of 1979. The response rate was 20%. One-way analysis of variance, Pearson's product moment correlation and chi-square statistics were used to test null hypotheses. The usage of several sources of information was significantly associated ($p \leq 0.05$) with the income and education of respondents. There was no significant difference among buyers with different income or education levels with respect to extent of information-seeking. There was a significant difference in the number of stores visited by buyers who paid different prices for upholstered furniture. Purchase experience of drapery buyers was significantly correlated with the number of

information sources used.

It was concluded that usage of different types and sources of information is product-specific. Previous purchase experience may widen a consumer's shopping scope. There is an element of risk when the purchase involves a reasonably large expenditure. Further research on the consumer's experience with textile products and the consumer's comprehension of textile labels are suggested.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine sources of information that consumers use in the purchase of home furnishing textile products, namely, blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. This study was part of a larger study of consumers' attitudes toward textile flammability. The link between a consumer's sources of textile information and the individual's attitudes toward flammability has many implications for consumer education. Depending on whether or not a consumer favors flame-retardant textile products, the content of information can be modified to change or reinforce existent beliefs and attitudes. The ultimate goal of this study was to provide some basis to make recommendations for the development of consumer education programs regarding textile flammability.

Statement of the Problem

The variety of home furnishing textile products in today's marketplace indicates that home furnishings are no longer mere staples. Rather, these products are rapidly becoming fashionable items. To meet the consumer's demand for attractive home furnishings, textile products are produced with different fiber contents, designs, fabric constructions and finishes. These different textile products perform differently during use and they also require different methods of maintenance.

To the consumer who has little knowledge of textile properties, choosing a textile product without any understanding of its performance can be risky because choice of a textile product that does not meet the level of serviceability expected by a consumer will result in monetary and time loss. Manufacturers of these textile products could provide a consumer with information to help in the selection of products which are appropriate for their intended end-use. However, this is not a common practice on the part of the manufacturers.

Among numerous attributes of textile products, flame-retardance is one that has not been brought to the attention of many consumers in Canada. In order to inform the public about flame-retardance of textiles, an investigation of where a consumer gathers information about textile products during the decision process is essential so that implications can be drawn as to how information can be communicated. Specifically, this study has been designed to identify certain prepurchase information-seeking activities of home furnishing textile purchasers, and to explore the relationships between pre-purchase search and income, education, purchase experience and cost of the product. It is hoped that the findings of this study will shed light on the way flammability information can be communicated to consumers.

Justification

In recent years, textile flammability has been accorded some attention when government regulations were set for some apparel

and household textiles. Crown (1979), in the beginning phases of an on-going study on consumers' attitudes toward flame-retardance, found that consumers who participated in focused group interviews did not think of flame-retardance very often. Results of the interviews also suggest that respondents were not cognizant of textile flammability regulations. Since flame-retardance does not seem to be a great concern for many consumers, direct investigation of information sources for flame-retardant textiles would be futile. This study, therefore, will focus on sources of information used by purchasers of home furnishing textile products. By understanding the usage of these sources of information, consumer education programs can be developed using those sources as vehicles through which awareness of textile flammability can be enhanced.

Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To determine what types of information the consumer sought most when purchasing home furnishing textile products. Types of information include price, fiber content, quality, care instructions and other special characteristics such as flame retardancy.
- 2a. To determine different sources of information the consumer used in the process of purchasing home furnishing textile products and the types of information available from these sources. Sources of information include marketer-dominated sources, consumer-oriented

sources and neutral sources.

- b. To determine the degree of usefulness of different sources of information in providing information about price, fiber content, quality and care instructions.
- c. To explore the consumer's preferences for sources from which information about flame-retardant textile products can be dispensed.
3. To investigate the relationships between types and sources of information used and the consumer's level of education and income.
4. To investigate the relationships between extent of information-seeking and
 - a. the consumer's level of education, income, and experience in purchasing similar textile products
 - b. cost of a textile product.

Null Hypotheses

To meet objectives 3 and 4, a number of null hypotheses have been developed:

1. No significant association exists between a consumer's level of education and
 - a. the types of information sought
 - b. the sources of information used.
2. No significant association exists between a consumer's income and
 - a. the types of information sought
 - b. the sources of information sought.

3. There is no significant difference in
 - a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visitedamong consumers of different levels of education.
4. There is no significant difference in
 - a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visitedamong consumers in different income levels.
5. There is no significant difference in
 - a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visitedby consumers purchasing products in different price categories.
6. No significant relationship exists between a consumer's experience in purchasing similar products and
 - a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visited.

Definitions

1. Prepurchase information-seeking - activities that a consumer engages in to gain knowledge of the textile products that are to be purchased before the purchase decision was made. This is operationally defined as the number of information sources used and the number of stores visited by a consumer before purchasing a textile product.

2. Types of information - price, fiber content, cleaning methods and quality of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture.
This is operationally defined as whether or not a consumer sought those four types of information before purchasing.
3. Sources of information - types of communication channels through which a consumer obtains knowledge of textile products. This is operationally defined as the frequency of mentioning any source of information in marketer-dominated, consumer-oriented or neutral categories.
4. Marketer-dominated sources - references to or evaluations of textile products originated by the manufacturers of the products or by the retail stores that carry that product. These include advertisements in newspapers or magazines, brochures from manufacturers, television commercials sponsored by retail stores or manufacturers, department store catalogs and product packages.
5. Consumer-oriented sources - references to or evaluations of textile products made by friends and acquaintances, neighbors or relatives.
6. Neutral sources - references to or evaluations of textile products published by independent product testing organizations. These include Consumer Reports, The Canadian Consumer, Consumer Buying Guide, pamphlets published by Consumer and Corporate Affairs or other government agencies, advice from specialists of independent textile testing laboratories and labels attached to textile products.

7. Home furnishing textile products - include blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture which are used in the home.
8. Experience in purchasing textile products - is operationally defined as the number of blanket, drapery or upholstered furniture purchases a consumer had made in the past five years.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature includes two sections. The first section is a brief description of different approaches to studying prepurchase information-seeking. The second section is a summary of literature on types and sources of information, purchase experience, education and income, cost of a product and the number of stores visited in relation to information-seeking.

Approaches to Studying Information-Seeking

When information-seeking patterns are examined, it must be remembered that prepurchase information search cannot be examined as an entity in itself. Rather, it is only part of the decision process a consumer goes through when a purchase is contemplated.

Schiffman and Kanuk (1978) summarized in a simple decision model the factors which affect search. The amount of information search depends on the characteristics of the product, situational factors and personal factors. Products which have high price and long interpurchase time seem to demand more information-seeking. The consumer who either lacks experience in purchasing specific products or who is not satisfied with previous purchases tends to seek more information. Consumers who are well educated and have high income also tend to seek more information.

Information search is closely related to another component

of the decision process - evaluation of alternatives. When a consumer contemplates a purchase, the individual will probably select from a pool of similar products. What the individual learns about the product, therefore, becomes experience which is stored in the memory. When the need to purchase a similar product arises, the consumer may or may not refer to the experience as a source of information.

The factors described by Schiffman and Kanuk were an integration of important findings of various studies which used different approaches to study information-seeking. A number of these approaches are reviewed below. They are the Howard-Sheth learning theory, Festinger's cognitive dissonance theory, Stigler's economic theory and the more recent behavior process approach proposed by Jacoby et al..

Howard and Sheth (1969) gave considerable attention to information search in their decision making model. In the Howard-Sheth context, information-seeking stems from the lack of experience with and knowledge of different products and the lack of well-defined choice criteria. To gain knowledge about different products, the consumer seeks information from the social or commercial environment. There are three types of information sources to which a consumer can turn. First, the physical characteristics of a brand which are categorized as significant stimuli. Secondly, verbal or visual characteristics of a brand which are categorized as symbolic stimuli. Finally, stimuli from the consumer's social environment such as reference groups or family are also information sources. Furthermore,

these sources can also help to clarify a consumer's motives for purchasing products.

According to the Howard-Sheth theory, information search can also be look on as a learning construct and a perceptual construct. As a perceptual construct, information search involves the way the consumer receives and processes information. As a learning construct, information search involves reinforcement of previous search activities, experience with a brand of product or information about a product. That is, if the consumer finds that the previously used information sources were conducive to a purchase, the consumer may seek information from those sources in subsequent purchases. If the consumer finds one brand satisfactory, that same brand may be selected again in the next purchase. In other words, the consumer learns about buying. A study by Bennett and Mandell (1969) is an example using the Howard-Sheth model as a reference for the study of information-seeking. Results of the study, however, failed to support the hypothesis that the amount of effort expended on information-seeking increases as buying experience increases.

The second school of thought in information-seeking is based on Festinger's theory of cognitive-dissonance. Information-seeking, according to Festinger, arises out of "some impending or possible future behavior for the person" (Festinger, 1972, p. 125). At the beginning of the information-seeking stage, the kind of information a consumer seeks is quite impartial. On the contrary, if a consumer experiences dissonance, exposure to information may

become selective so that dissonance is reduced, or information that increases dissonance will be avoided. This theory has been used quite extensively as a framework in studying prepurchase information-seeking (Mills, 1965; Holloway, 1967; Mittelstaedt, 1971, Westbrook and Newman, 1978).

The third approach to studying information-seeking is the economic approach. This particular school of thought is different from previous ones because, in the economics context, information search can be examined in isolation from environmental or internal factors.

Stigler (1961) was the first to examine information-seeking using economic theory. According to Stigler, information search stems from changes in price of commodities. In order to know what is the favorable price to pay for a certain commodity, the consumer starts to search for information on price. The economic model is based on four principles. First, if a commodity demands a larger portion of the consumer's expenditures, the amount of information search will increase because information-seeking then becomes a means of saving. Secondly, when the consumer engages in repeat purchases, the process of purchasing the same commodity becomes experience which can increase the efficiency of information search. Thirdly, when an increased number of sellers engage in repetitive selling, search will be accumulated in time. Finally, as the geographical size of the market increases, the cost of search also increases. Information search is functional only to a certain point beyond which returns

from an additional unit of search will diminish. Search for information can be costly in terms of time. To reduce the time cost, several consumers may pool information by comparing prices. In this way, two buyers are comparing prices of the same commodity from two or more sellers and as a result, less time is required to seek more information.

Nelson (1970) extended Stigler's theory and further distinguished between search and experience. To search for information about a commodity, the consumer must select from different alternatives before purchasing while the process of selecting a commodity among many alternatives becomes experience. Gaining experience may be considered an expensive method of acquiring information because instead of searching and discovering the best alternative, the consumer acquires experience by trying different brands which may or may not be satisfactory. Both Stigler and Nelson acknowledged the difficulty of studying quality of goods under economic theory. The consumer's inability to differentiate qualities of products was the reason they gave. Goldman and Johanson (1978) attempted to provide empirical evidence for the economic model by studying behavior of 424 gasoline buyers, but findings of the study failed to support the economic theory.

Goldman (1978) used two economic approaches to study the shopping scope of lower income consumers in Jerusalem. The two approaches were the restricted scope and the wider scope approach. The restricted scope approach postulates limited shopping alternatives for lower income consumers because they tend to shop at places near

their home and hence, they know little about the market. On the contrary, the wider scope approach implies that the amount of shopping in which lower income consumers engage will increase when savings from an additional unit of search is high and when marginal opportunity cost of time is low. Findings of this study supported the restricted scope theory. Low income furniture buyers were found to have a lower level of knowledge about the market, and consequently, they engaged in less prepurchase shopping. However, there was no relation between shopping scope and income level of buyers of ladies' shoes. This implies that amount of shopping is related to product class as well.

A more recent approach to studying information-seeking is developed by Jacoby, Chestnut, Weigl and Fisher (1976). This approach is designed to offset misrepresentations of survey research, a common technique used by many researchers to collect data on information-seeking. Essentially, a free simulation of information-seeking behavior is developed to bridge the discrepancy between the consumer's verbal expressions of the information that would be sought and the actual information sought. The behavior component involves capturing the process of events the consumer engages in when seeking information. The process component means recording events "which occur sequentially over time and result in a decision" (Jacoby et al., 1978, p. 533).

Experiments using behavioral process methodology usually involve simulating three information dimensions of a brand: depth (quality), sequence (order and content (type)). An information display

board (IDB) is an instrument developed solely for this approach.

For example, when a researcher wants to examine information-seeking behavior of buyers of radios, different brands of radios will be placed along the columns of the IDB and the information dimensions of different brands will be arranged in rows. As a result, a matrix is formed and each cell of the matrix contains a card with information corresponding to its dimension. During the information acquisition process, participants are free to pick cards which contain information they wish to obtain and place them in a tray. They may not refer to the cards they have already picked but they can choose a duplicate card if they wish to use that information again. After respondents decide on the brand, the cards will be collected and results will be tabulated from them. Due to the novelty of this approach, its use has been limited to only a few studies (Jacoby, Szybillo and Busato-Schach, 1977; Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher, 1978).

The Engel, Blackwell and Kollh (1978) model of consumer behavior was used as the conceptual framework for this study. This model incorporates many theories and allows for an understanding of interrelationships among them. For example, the Howard-Sheth learning theory is the backbone to the information and experience component of the model while Festinger's cognitive dissonance is the dominant theory in the development of satisfaction-dissatisfaction components of the model. Since this model incorporates numerous components, discussion of the model will be limited to the ones which are relevant to this study.

The core of the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat model is the decision process component. According to these authors, the decision process starts with the recognition of a problem. When the consumer contemplates a purchase, he may search for information about the products he intends to purchase. Engel et al. defined search as "a motivated decision to seek new inputs" (Engel et al., 1978, p. 238). The quantity and quality of existing information and perceived risk are some of the factors that can affect the consumer's motivation to search. Through repeat purchases, the consumer accumulates information about products and hence, the propensity to search may be lower as repeat purchases increase. Satisfaction with the products, inter-purchase time and changes in the variety of products can also affect the consumer's propensity to search for information.

The consumer's willingness to search for information depends on his perception of the benefits to be gained from search and the cost of obtaining the information. Some of the benefits include knowledge about the product and others' opinions while costs of search include expenditure of time and money, and psychological frustrations. Individual differences such as the consumer's social and economic background can also affect the propensity to search.

When the consumer seeks information, there are four general categories of information sources to which he can turn. These are word-of-mouth communication, general content media, personal selling and advertising. The relative importance and the role of each of these sources are different. Engel et al. tend to emphasize

the marketing potential of these sources while Cox's treatment of the different information sources (Cox, 1967) is more appropriate for the descriptive data that the researcher wishes to collect for this study.

Concepts which were examined in this study included types and sources of information the consumer used and the number of stores visited before purchasing a home furnishing textile product. The consumer's experience in purchasing similar products, the individual's income and education, and the cost of the products were examined in relation to information-seeking activities.

Sources and Types of Information

There are three main categories of sources of information in general: marketer-dominated, consumer-oriented and neutral sources (Cox, 1967). Each of these different sources has its own characteristics in terms of cost, credibility and the consumer's perception of its usefulness.

Marketer-dominated sources usually include advertisements, television commercials and pamphlets put out by manufacturers of goods and services. The cost of obtaining information from these sources is low because a consumer encounters these sources very readily in everyday life. Cox stated that marketer-dominated sources provide information about performance of products and that the kind of information provided is also adequate for many of the decisions a consumer has to face. Trustworthiness of these sources, however, is

often questioned because of their "salespitch" approach.

Consumer-oriented sources include interpersonal communication among friends, relatives or neighbors. Seeking information from these sources is considered more costly because it takes more time and effort to obtain. It lacks the variety of performance information that marketer-dominated information provides and often, negative evaluations by friends or neighbors emerge.

Neutral information sources are evaluations of products which originate from an independent agent. These include product testing results from publications such as Consumer Reports or Canadian Consumer. Thorelli, Becker and Engledow (1975) identified certain characteristics of product testing magazines. These magazines are geared to the retail consumer. The products that are tested are medium and higher priced durables, automobiles, convenience foods and inexpensive durables. Test reports often rank brands of the same product, provide buying advice and offer comparative data which results in possible negative evaluation of a certain product. Information gathered through neutral sources is considered expensive because there is often a fee charged for the use of such information. The fee can be in the form of the subscription cost of the magazine or a membership in a particular organization.

Use of different sources of information varies with the kind of product a consumer intends to purchase. Woodruff (1972) studied the relative importance of marketer-dominated, consumer-oriented and neutral sources of information to 60 couples in a mid-

western community in the United States. When they were asked to select among brands of color television, they ranked consumer-oriented sources as having the most impact on their choice. Marketer-dominated and neutral sources were less important in helping to make the selection. Neutral sources, however, were found to be effective in reducing uncertainty. Consumer-oriented and marketer-dominated sources were least likely to reduce uncertainty.

O'Brien (1972) attempted to identify motivations of 144 residents of Tucson, Arizona, to seek information about either an automobile or instant breakfast. After respondents stated the criteria they had used in the selection of these products, they rated the importance of each criterion. Four criteria were identified - functional, financial, aesthetic and social. The four sources of information examined were advertisements, articles in newspapers or magazines, salesperson and word-of-mouth communication. It was found that automobile buyers tended to use a combination of functional and financial or functional, financial and aesthetic criteria for the purchase. For instant breakfast buyers, they used a combination of functional and aesthetic or functional, financial and aesthetic criteria for the purchase. There were no differences in usefulness among the four sources but salespersons were considered less useful when functional criteria were dominant in a purchase. For instant breakfast buyers, word-of-mouth communication was important when aesthetic criteria were dominant in a decision.

Katona and Mueller (1955) undertook a study of purchase

decisions of appliance and sport shirt buyers. Components of information-seeking activities included advice from others, visiting stores and following advertisements. It was found that one-third of the appliance buyers sought only one source of information or none at all. The most common source consulted by buyers was friends and acquaintances, followed by visiting stores and using printed information. Buyers of sport shirts sought less information than buyers of appliances. The relatively less costly nature of the product may have contributed to such a tendency. For sport shirt buyers, the most common source of information was visiting stores, followed by advice from friends or relatives, and advertisements. Features that buyers of appliances considered were mechanical, properties, new technological features and the product's performance. Ten percent of the buyers received such information from sales clerks or printed materials. For sport shirt buyers, appearance, color and pattern of the shirts were product features that were taken into consideration when purchasing.

LaGrand and Udell (1964) studied the types and sources of information that consumers used in the purchase of living room furniture and television sets, and the usefulness of different information sources. Twenty-four furniture buyers were interviewed using aided and unaided recall techniques. It was found that store visits, discussions with friends and relatives and newspaper advertisements were the most frequently mentioned sources of information. Types of information sought were quality and performance, price, style and

appearance, special features, and size. Information about the quality of the product was sought through store visits, salesmen and repairmen, friends and acquaintances. Sources from which information on price was gathered were store visits, newspaper advertisements, friends and acquaintances.

Newman and Staelin (1973) investigated information sources of 217 buyers of new cars and 430 buyers of one or more appliances. These buyers were interviewed using aided and unaided recall methods. It was found that sources of information for car and appliance buyers were similar. Forty-four percent used only one source or none, 44% used two or three sources and only 12% used four sources. Information on quality and performance features were sought from friends, neighbors, books, articles and pamphlets. Price information was obtained from books, articles, pamphlets, advertisements, friends and neighbors. Appliance buyers tended to use newspapers and magazines more often and car buyers used books, articles and pamphlets more often.

Westbrook and Fornell (1979) studied patterns of information source usage of 236 buyers of major household appliances in metropolitan areas of Detroit, Michigan. It was found that appliance buyers could be classified according to information source usage and there were two general classifications. The first group of buyers could be identified by the extent of their physical shopping and four types of shoppers were identified within this first group: the objective shopper, the moderate shopper, the store intense shopper and personal advice seekers. The second group of buyers showed a tendency to

prefer neutral sources over personal sources.

Zentner et al. (1972) studied information sources for flame-retardant garments. The sample consisted of 1,090 mothers with preschool age children from six different states. Attempts were made to analyze the relationships between education, socioeconomic level, and usage of different information sources. It was found that 75% of the respondents used three or fewer sources. When the level of education was examined in relation to information source usage, those who had a higher level of education tended to use newspapers and magazines more frequently than those who had lower education. Those with college degrees used sales personnel more often than those with some college or professional training. Information source usage also differed according to respondents' socioeconomic status. The lower class group sought information from friends, family and salespeople. The upper-middle class used newspapers and magazines as sources while the lower-middle class relied more on television for information. Urban consumers were less likely to use television as a key source of information than were rural consumers. Respondents also differed in their interest in flame-retardant textile products. Those with a higher level of education indicated that they tried to purchase flame-retardant sleepwear while those with a lower education level exhibited more interest in flame-retardant curtains. Information sources that were used by respondents, in order of frequency, were newspapers or magazines, television, friends and family, bulletins and leaflets, radio, salespeople and meetings. Zentner et al.

concluded that respondents were either not aware of flame-retardant textile products or they did not take advantage of available information sources.

Jackson (1977) examined the effects of information content on awareness of flame-retardance of 136 mothers of elementary school age children in Tennessee. Two essays - one in an emotional tone and one in a logical tone - were read by respondents. The essay in an emotional tone exhibited a significant effect on their consideration of safety as a buying goal.

Purchase Experience

Studies investigating the relationship between purchase experience and information-seeking indicate that the amount of information-seeking might not decrease with increased purchase experience. Bennett and Mandell (1969) studied the prepurchase information-seeking behavior of 180 new car buyers in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Ten sources of information were developed. These were Consumer Reports, dealer visits, expert opinion, friends' opinion, reading brochures, discussions with spouse, auto show, advertisements, news articles and discussions with children. These ten sources were weighted according to the amount of effort expended to obtain the information. It was found that no significant relationship existed between the number of automobiles a consumer had owned and the amount of information sought before the purchase. Less information was sought, however, if a consumer was purchasing the same make of

automobile as he had previously owned.

Newman and Staelin (1972) investigated information-seeking behavior of 653 new car and major appliance buyers across the United States. It was found that buyers who considered only one brand in the beginning of the purchase process were satisfied users of their old brand, but only half of the satisfied users actually limited their alternatives to only one brand. For dissatisfied users, less than one-fourth considered buying the same brand. These results tend to indicate that experience with the performance of products affect the consumer's willingness to receive information.

Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher (1978) examined individual difference factors in prepurchase information-seeking. Fifty-two female and eight male undergraduates of Purdue University selected brands of cereals with the help of an "information display board". Sixteen brands of cereals with 35 dimensions were available to students for selection. Students were free to choose any brand or any kind of information related to that brand. It was found that students who purchased cereals frequently tended to select fewer brands but they acquired more information.

Sproles (1978) investigated the effects of varying amounts of information on consumers' perceptions and ratings of brands in the same product class. One hundred and forty-two undergraduates enrolled in the School of Consumer and Family Studies in Purdue University were asked to rate the quality of competing brands of slow cookers and blankets on a ten-point interval rating scale.

Students were grouped into high and low consumer sophistication categories. Consumer sophistication was measured by compiling students' age, semester classification, number of consumer oriented courses completed, experience in 4-H programs, self-perceived level of knowledge in evaluating product quality, self confidence in choosing quality products, brand name awareness, and level of purchasing experience in the previous year, to arrive at an index ranging from 0 to 8. Students were supplied with different sources of information when rating the products. It was found that information increased consumers' efficiency in the rating of both the slow cooker and blankets. Those who had more experience in purchasing tended to rate products higher than the Consumer Reports rating when only marketer-dominated information was available. When both marketer-dominated and product rating results were available, those with experience in purchasing and those who had little experience in purchasing rated the products the same. This implied that the consumers who had little knowledge of products could make sound decisions if adequate information was supplied.

Income and Education

Income and education are factors which can affect a consumer's prepurchase information-seeking activities. Findings of related studies are quite consistent.

Katona and Mueller (1955) found that information-seeking

tended to increase with education and income. When income alone was examined, however, consumers in the high income group were less likely to seek information. Low income and low education groups were also less likely to seek information.

Newman and Staelin (1972) found that buyers of new cars and appliances who had not completed high school sought less information than consumers who had completed high school, who attended vocational training or who had a college degree. Consumers with advanced degrees sought the same amount of information as those who had not completed high school. Newman and Staelin (1973) reported patterns of information-seeking of purchasers of new cars and appliances to be identical to the 1972 findings.

Claxton, Fry and Portis (1974) studied prepurchase information gathering patterns of 287 furniture buyers from London, Ontario. Buyers were sorted into three clusters. Those who visited more than 20 stores, who used more than three sources of information and spent about a year considering the purchase were classified as the thorough, store intense group. Buyers who visited six stores, who used about three sources of information and spent several months considering the purchase were classified as the thorough, balanced group. Buyers who consulted only one source of information, visited two stores and had spent only a few weeks considering the purchase were grouped as non-thorough buyers. It was found that thorough, store intense buyers had higher income and education. Non-thorough buyers had lower income and education.

Andreasen and Ratchford (1976) investigated the effects of decision types on usage of information sources. They listed three factors which could affect use of information sources. They were need for information, ability to obtain and use information and personal preference for information-seeking. The rationale for selecting these three factors was that lower income groups had greater need for information because they had to make the best use of their limited resources. The better educated individuals would perceive decisions to be more complex and consequently, a wider variety of information sources would be used. Individuals who considered themselves very sociable or responsible would use more information sources to fulfill the needs to be sociable or responsible. It was hypothesized that usage of information sources would be positively related to education and negatively related to income. A convenience sample of 67 adult females was asked to rate seven decisions. It was found that there was a positive relationship between level of education and use of information. Information-seeking was lowest for those who had income under \$6,000.

O'Brien (1972) supplied an explanation for such consistent findings. He concluded that education affected consumers' ability to comprehend materials from different sources, therefore, those who received higher education were more capable of understanding and evaluating different sources of information. On the other hand, the reason why consumers in high and low income groups seek less information than those in the middle income group was that those in the high

income group could afford not to seek information, while those in the low income group simply could not afford the time and effort to look for information.

Information-Seeking and Cost of a Product

The cost of a product is considered an element of risk in this study. Since the consumer's perception of risks is difficult to measure, the costs of textile products were used to represent monetary loss due to an unserviceable product.

Brown and Gentry (1975) categorized risks according to the consequences of a purchase. Economic consequences included the cost of a product, consumers' income and the importance of the product to consumers' income and the importance of the product to consumers' physical well being. Non-economic consequences included the effects a product had on others' opinions toward consumers and the inconvenience that consumers experience if a product failed to live up to its expected standard of performance.

Newman and Staelin (1975) found that appliance buyers sought more information as the cost of the appliance increased. Information-seeking for cars increased only for buyers who initially considered two or more brands of cars. Information decreased with cost for those who considered only one brand at the initial buying stage.

Summary

Findings of related literature suggest that in general, the consumer seeks very little information in the purchase of durable goods. Use of sources and types of information depends on the nature of the product a consumer intends to purchase. The relationship between purchase experience and information-seeking found in various studies was not consistent. Studies relating income, education and information-seeking yielded consistent findings. Consumers in high income groups tend to seek less information whereas consumers with higher level of education tend to seek more information. The amount of information sought generally increases with the cost of a product, which represents an element of risk to consumers. Studies on information sources of flame-retardant textiles were few. Sources of information for flame-retardant textiles vary with the consumer's education and socioeconomic status. There is evidence to suggest that content of flame-retardant information may affect the consumer's awareness of product safety as a buying goal.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

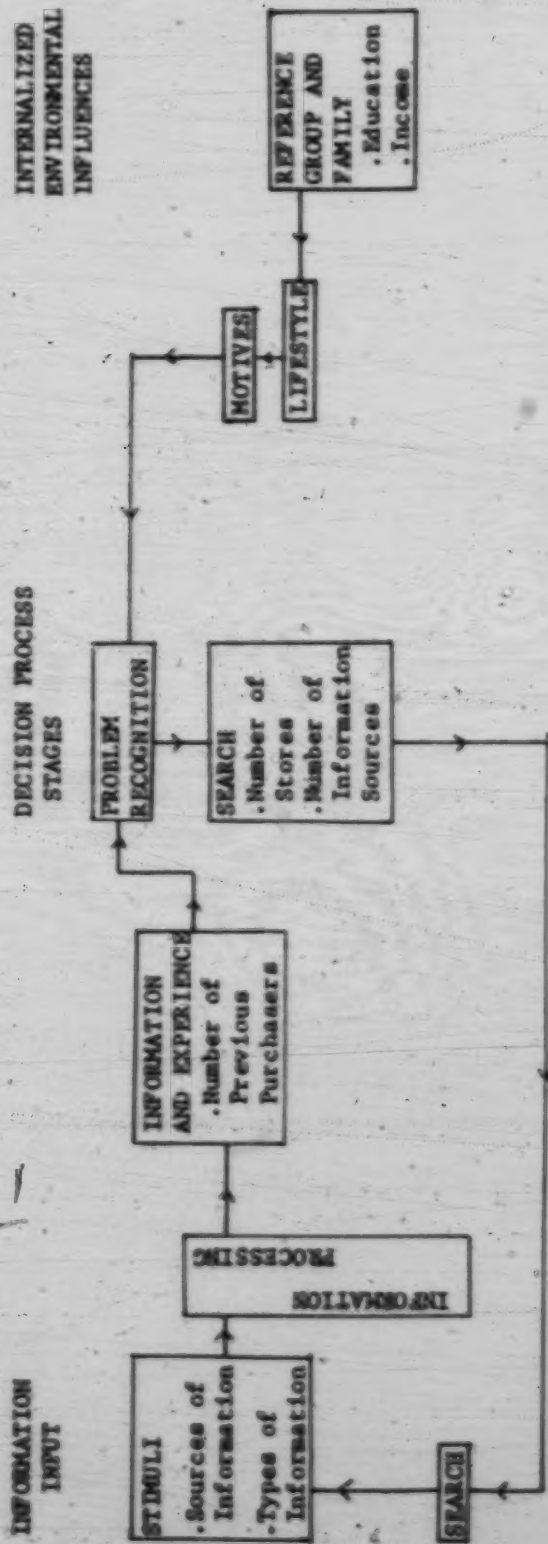
This section describes the conceptual framework, sample selection procedure, description of the questionnaire developed for this study and methods of data analysis.

Conceptual Framework

The Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) model of consumer behavior provides the framework for this study (Fig. 1). Sections of the model which pertain to this study are the information input and decision process stages.

The decision process starts with the recognition of a problem. In this study, respondents were asked to recall the sources of information they had used in their last purchase of a blanket, draperies or upholstered furniture within the last five years. Their experience in previous purchases of textile products is stored in their memory as information.

If a consumer thinks that previous experience is adequate to support a purchase, an internal search for information may take place. On the contrary, if a consumer feels that his knowledge about the intended purchase is insufficient, he may engage in an external search for information. Literature pertaining to purchase experience and information-seeking activities indicates that there are two viewpoints from which experience can be studied. Purchase experience



Adapted from: Engel et al. Consumer Behavior (3rd Edition). Dryden Press, 1978, p.556

Figure 1
An Adaptation of the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat
Model of Consumer Behavior

has been examined in terms of the actual frequency of previous purchases (Bennett and Mandell, 1969; Jacoby et al., 1978; Sproles, 1978) and in terms of satisfaction and dissatisfaction as a result of previous purchases (Katona and Mueller, 1955; Newman and Staelin, 1972).

Prepurchase information-seeking activities examined in this study were the number of stores visited before making a purchase, the types of information sought, the number of information sources used, and the different information sources used. The selection of these factors was based on studies by Katona and Mueller (1955), Newman and Staelin (1973) and LeGrand and Udell (1964).

There are several factors which affect information search. The specific ones which were studied were the consumer's income and education, experience in purchasing home furnishing textile products, and the cost of the textile product.

In the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat model, income and education are part of family and reference groups which in turn are components of internalized environmental influences. Family and reference groups affect the consumer's lifestyle and personality. These factors can influence the consumer's motives for purchasing and the perception of a problem. Lifestyle, personality and motives for purchasing were not the concerns of this study, but they have been shown to affect decision-making (Brody and Cunningham, 1968; Atkinson, 1957). Katona and Mueller (1955), Claxton et al. (1974), Newman and Staelin (1972) and O'Brien (1972) were major studies from which relationships between information-seeking and income and education were developed.

The cost of a product was considered an element of risk which could affect a consumer's entire decision process. Since perception of risk is difficult to measure, the cost of textile products was used to represent risk of monetary loss. Studies by Newman and Staelin (1972) and Jacoby et al. (1978) indicated a relationship between information search and cost of a product.

Selection of the Sample

A multistage cluster sample of 1,000 respondents of the province of Alberta was collected in the fall of 1979. The justification for employing this sampling technique lies within the ultimate goal of the study. In order to make recommendations for the development of consumer education and information programs, an overview of the information search patterns of the residents of Alberta would give indications as to how education and information programs could be tailored to meet their needs. Since it was not feasible in terms of time and manpower to collect a random sample of the province of Alberta, a cluster sample seemed to be most appropriate for the purposes of this study.

Sampling Procedure

According to Lazervitz (1968), the initial stage of cluster sampling begins with the selection of primary sampling units. These primary units are then subdivided into clusters called secondary

sampling units. This process is multistage sampling. If the clusters are selected according to geographic units, the sample becomes an area sample.

For this study, the primary sampling unit was the province of Alberta. Secondary sampling units were urban and rural centers of Alberta.

The process by which the sample was chosen was dependent on the availability of information about the population distribution of Alberta. The percentage of the sample size that was designated as urban and rural and the selection of the specific areas were based on 1976 census data. More recent figures of urban-rural distribution were not available at the time this study was planned.

According to census data, 75% of the total population of Alberta in 1976 resided in urban areas and the other 25% resided in rural areas. To be classified as an urban area, the population of a district must exceed 1,000 and the density must also exceed 1,000 per square mile. From the 1976 listing of cities, towns and villages, all areas which met these two requirements were sorted out and they formed the pool from which 750 respondents were selected. There was a total of 64 areas which could be classified as urban centers. Nine of the 64 urban centers were classified as cities (Appendix I).

These nine cities constituted 86% of the total population of all urban centers. Since a total of 750 residents were to be selected from all these urban centers, 645 came from these nine cities.

Furthermore, Calgary and Edmonton each possessed approximately 43%

of the total population of the nine cities; therefore, 277 were selected from each of Calgary and Edmonton (total = 554). Medicine Hat and Grande Prairie were randomly selected from the remaining seven cities and 91 residents were selected proportionately from these two cities (total of all cities = 645). From the remaining 55 urban centers which were not classified as cities, Fort Saskatchewan, Drayton Valley and High Prairie were randomly selected. One hundred and five (total urban minus urban city) residents were randomly selected from these three areas according to their proportions to the total of the three areas. Table I shows the areas that made up the urban cluster.

The remaining 25% of the sample was selected from towns and villages which did not meet the requirements for urban classification. Ten were randomly selected from the 163 towns and villages. The number of residents selected from each town and village was proportionate to its total population. Table II shows the areas that made up the rural cluster.

When the calculations were completed, names and addresses were randomly selected from 1979 telephone directories of different districts until the designated number for each cluster was reached.

Table I
Distribution of Areas Which Made Up the Urban Cluster

CITIES				TOWNS			
Name	Population	%	n	Name	Population	%	n
Grande Prairie	17,626	5	32	Fort Saskatchewan	8,304	56	59
Medicine Hat	32,811	9	59	Drayton Valley	4,303	29	30
Edmonton	491,359	43	277	High Prairie	2,281	15	16
Calgary	530,816	43	277				
Total	1,072,698	100	645		14,888	100	105

Table II
Distribution of Areas Which Made Up the Rural Cluster

Name	Population	%	n
Forestburg	808	16	40
Carbon	435	8	20
Breton	424	8	20
Ryley	432	8	20
Barons	283	6	15
Millet	762	15	38
Willington	308	6	15
Lamont	997	19	48
Hines Creek	503	10	25
Bawlf	207	4	10
Total	5,159	100	251

Description of the Instrument

A questionnaire was developed by the researcher for this study. There were three parts to the questionnaire, one set of questions each for blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture purchases. Respondents were asked to check the sources they had used to gather information about price, fiber content, quality and cleaning methods of the product they purchased. In addition, data on the number of stores visited, the number of similar purchases, price of the item, respondent's income, level of education, sex and the area of the residence were also gathered. Respondents were asked to indicate usefulness of different information sources and preferences for

flame-retardance information sources by checking a five-point Likert scale. A covering letter accompanied the questionnaire requesting the member of the household who was most capable of answering the questionnaire to complete it. A return envelope was included in each questionnaire package.

The questionnaire was pretested in mid-November on a convenience sample of 10 people. Minor changes were made after the pretests. The final questionnaires (Appendix II) were sent out during the first week of December, 1979.

Analysis of Data

Table III summarizes the statistical analyses used to test each hypothesis.

Table III Summary of Statistical Analyses

HYPOTHESIS	DEPENDENT VARIABLE	INDEPENDENT VARIABLE	LEVEL OF MEASUREMENT	STATISTICS
1	a. types of information b. sources of information	education	nominal/nominal	chi-square
2	a. types of information b. sources of information	income	nominal/nominal	chi-square
3	a. number of information sources b. number of stores	education	interval/nominal	one-way analysis of variance
4	a. number of information sources b. number of stores	income	interval/nominal	one-way analysis of variance
5	a. number of information sources b. number of stores	price	interval/nominal	one-way analysis of variance
6	a. number of information sources b. number of stores	experience	interval/interval	Pearson's r

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

In this chapter, a description of the sample and descriptive and statistical analyses will be presented. A 0.05 level of significance was set when testing the null hypotheses.

Description of the Sample

A total of 200 questionnaires was returned by the end of January, 1980. After eliminating questionnaires which were answered improperly, the data from 193 cases were used.

Seventy-eight percent of the respondents were female and 22% were male. Table IV shows the distribution of respondents by area of residence. According to 1976 census data, 75% of Alberta's population resided in urban centers. Almost 74% of the respondents of this study reported living in either a city or a town. Although a few of the towns selected for this study were not classified as urban, these figures approximate the proportions of rural and urban population found in census data. The majority of the respondents lived in a city. The second most frequently checked category was "farm".

Table V shows the income distribution of the sample. The modal category was the \$20,000 - \$24,999 income range. Almost 55% of the respondents had family income of \$24,999 or less, while the three highest income groups made up almost 30% of the sample.

Table IV
Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Areas of Residence
n=191

Residence Classification	Percentage
City	60.2
Town	13.6
Village	10.5
Farm	14.1
Other	1.6
Total	100.00

Table V
Percentage Distribution of the Sample's Total Family Income
n=186

Total Family Income	Percentage
under \$10,000	5.4
\$10,000 - \$14,999	14.0
\$15,000 - \$19,999	15.6
\$20,000 - \$24,999	19.9
\$25,000 - \$29,999	16.1
\$30,000 - \$34,999	5.4
\$35,000 - \$39,999	11.8
\$40,000 and over	11.8
Total	100.00

Table VI shows the respondents' level of education. The modal category was 'completed high school', while almost 30% of the sample held bachelor's or advanced degrees.

Table VI
 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Level of Education
 n=189

Level of Education	Percentage
Completed up to Grade 10	7.9
Completed high school	27.0
Completed technical college	10.0
Completed trade or business school	17.5
Bachelor's degree	21.2
Advanced degrees	8.5
Other	7.9
Total	100.00

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

There were 112 respondents who had purchased blankets in the past five years, 126 who had purchased draperies and 122 who had purchased upholstered furniture. Table VII shows the frequencies of purchasing these three products. Almost 43% of blanket purchasers bought a blanket twice in the past five years, while almost 42% of drapery purchasers bought draperies only once. The majority of the upholstered furniture buyers also bought upholstered furniture only once in the past five years. Almost 75% of the blanket buyers had bought a blanket no more than twice while about 68% of the drapery buyers had bought draperies no more than twice in the past five years. Almost 90% of the upholstered furniture buyers made two or fewer purchases in the last five years. The mean for the number of previous

purchases was 2.1 for buyers of blankets, 2.2 for buyers of draperies and 1.6 for buyers of upholstered furniture.

Table VII
Percentage Distribution of the Frequencies
of Purchasing Blankets, Draperies and Upholstered
Furniture

Number of times	Blanket n=111	Drapery n=123	Upholstered Furniture n=121
1	32.4	41.7	62.8
2	42.3	26.0	24.0
3	13.5	13.4	9.0
4	9.0	12.6	2.5
5	1.0	3.9	1.7
more than 5	1.8	2.4	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table VIII shows the number of stores visited by buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. The mean for the number of stores visited was 2.3 for blanket purchasers, 2.8 for drapery purchasers and 3.4 for upholstered furniture purchasers.

Table VIII

Percentage Distribution of the Number of
Stores Visited by Buyers of Different Products

Number of Stores	Blanket Purchasers n=108	Drapery Purchasers n=124	Upholstered Furniture Purchasers n=118
^a 0	0.0	7.4	0.0
1	25.0	13.7	9.3
2	24.0	17.7	19.5
3	31.5	27.4	20.3
4	7.4	16.9	22.0
5	6.5	11.3	16.9
more than 5	5.6	5.6	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

^a - '0' means buyers did not visit any stores but bought through catalog shopping.

Table IX shows the distribution of the price paid by purchasers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. For blankets, most respondents paid the middle and middle-to-lower price range. The highest price reported was \$115. Most drapery buyers also paid the middle and middle-to-lower price range although the percentage of buyers who paid over \$500 was high. The prices reported by these buyers ranged from \$600 to \$2,000. Many of the upholstered furniture buyers paid the middle price range. A relatively high percentage of buyers paid over \$950. The reported prices in this category ranged from \$1,200 to \$2,200.

Table IX

Percentage Distribution of the Price Paid by Buyers of Different Products

Blanket n=109		Percentage
under \$10.00		13.8
\$10 - \$19.99		29.4
\$20 - \$29.99		23.9
\$30 - \$39.99		19.3
\$40 - \$49.99		7.2
\$50 and over		6.5
Total		100.0
Drapery n=125		
under \$50.00		16.8
\$50 - \$99.99		25.6
\$100 - \$299.99		31.2
\$300 - \$499.99		14.4
\$500 and over		12.0
Total		100.0
Upholstered furniture n=121		
under \$150		5.0
\$150 - \$349.99		17.4
\$350 - \$549.99		26.4
\$550 - \$749.99		14.9
\$750 - \$949.99		17.3
\$950 and over		19.0
Total		100.0

Table X shows the distribution of responses to the Likert scales which measure the importance of different product features of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. Over half of the blanket buyers either agreed or strongly agreed that each of price, fiber content, warmth, cleaning methods and appearance were important

Table X
Percentage Distribution of Importance of Different Product
Features of Blankets, Draperies and Upholstered Furniture

Product Feature	Blanket n=111					Drapery n=121					Upholstered Furniture n=125				
	SD	D	N	A	SA	SD	D	N	A	SA	SD	D	N	A	SA
Price	1.8	5.4	15.3	55.5	22.5	0.8	2.4	4.8	60.0	32.0	0.8	3.3	5.0	62.8	28.1
Quality	-	-	0.9	39.1	59.1	1.6	3.2	6.4	49.6	39.2	-	0.8	1.6	35.2	62.3
Fiber Content	-	1.8	4.5	43.6	50.0	0.8	7.2	-	60.0	32.0	-	2.5	6.6	39.3	51.6
Cleaning Methods	-	-	10.8	31.5	57.7	0.8	4.0	5.6	44.4	45.2	-	0.8	7.4	36.9	54.9
Appearance	0.9	6.6	14.2	59.4	18.9	-	-	-	30.4	69.6	0.8	0.8	2.5	32.8	63.1

SD - strongly disagree
D - disagree
N - neutral
A - agree
SA - strongly agree

features in purchasing blankets. On the product feature 'warmth', 59% of the respondents strongly agreed to its importance. Seventy-eight percent of the buyers agreed or strongly agreed that appearance was an important product feature to consider.

Almost 70% of the drapery buyers strongly agreed that appearance was important in buying draperies. It is worthwhile to note that all drapery buyers either agreed or strongly agreed with the importance of appearance.

For buyers of upholstered furniture, at least 50% strongly agreed with the importance of durability, fiber content, cleaning methods and appearance.

Table XI shows the types of information sought by buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture.

Price was most frequently checked by blanket buyers, followed by cleaning methods, fiber content and quality. It is worthwhile to note that 14% of the buyers relied on their own experience when considering the quality of a blanket. For draperies, price was the most frequently checked item followed by cleaning methods, fiber content and quality. Price was most frequently checked by upholstered furniture buyers followed by quality, fiber content and cleaning methods. Twelve to seventeen percent of the buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture relied on their own experience for information about product features.

Table XI
Percentage Distribution of Types of Information Sought by Buyers of
Different Products

	Blanket n=112			Drapery n=126			Upholstered Furniture n=122					
	Q	F	P	Q	F	P	Q	F	P			
YES												
^a Both internal & external search	38.4	67.0	67.9	80.2	51.2	65.6	70.6	87.2	66.4	62.3	57.4	87.6
YES												
^b Internal search only	14.3	0.9	1.8	-	6.4	2.4	4.0	-	5.7	4.1	2.5	-
NO	47.3	32.1	30.4	19.8	42.4	32.0	25.4	12.8	27.9	33.6	40.2	12.4

a Internal and external search - referring to own experience and other information sources
b Internal search only - referring to own experience only
Q - Information on quality
F - Fiber content information
C - Cleaning information
P - Price information

Table XII shows the sources from which buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture obtained general information about products.

Browsing through stores was the most frequently checked source of information in all three product categories. For blanket purchasers, catalogs, advertisements and friends were the next most frequently checked sources. Other sources reported by respondents were local district home economists, radio, flyers in the mail and own experience. Drapery purchasers checked catalogs and friends as the next most attended to sources. Other sources reported by drapery buyers were district home economists, an interior decorator, a drapery seamstress, friends in the business and previous experience. For upholstered furniture buyers, catalogs, advertisements and friends were the next most frequently checked sources. Other sources reported by respondents were local district home economists, salespeople and previous experience.

A majority of blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture buyers obtained price information from browsing through stores. For blanket buyers, the next most frequently checked sources were catalogs and advertisements. For drapery buyers, catalogs and salespeople were the next most frequently checked sources. Other sources reported by drapery buyers included consultants, interior decorators and local district home economists. For upholstered furniture buyers, advertisements, catalogs, and salespeople were the next most frequently checked sources.

Table XII
Percentage Distribution of Buyers' Usage of Sources
of Information

	Blanket n=11				Drapery n=126				Upholstered Furniture n=122						
	G	P	Q	F	C	G	P	Q	F	C	G	P	Q	F	C
Advertisements	27.0	30.6	7.1	11.7	10.7	23.8	24.8	10.4	14.8	9.0	45.9	48.8	13.1	14.8	9.0
Catalogs	39.6	37.8	9.8	19.8	13.4	55.6	55.2	22.4	21.3	11.5	46.7	48.8	20.5	21.3	11.5
Consumer Reports	8.1	10.8	21.4	17.1	23.2	46.0	25.6	30.4	21.3	21.3	39.3	24.8	38.5	21.3	21.3
Browsing through Stores	76.6	66.7	-	-	-	77.0	68.0	-	-	-	90.2	76.7	-	-	-
Textile Specialist	1.8	-	1.8	2.7	0.9	8.7	-	5.6	5.7	8.2	4.9	-	7.4	5.7	8.2
Salesperson	-	16.2	9.8	18.9	20.5	-	33.6	23.2	42.6	40.2	-	40.8	58.2	42.6	40.2
Labels	-	-	-	50.5	54.5	-	-	-	50.8	41.8	-	-	-	50.8	41.8
Own Experience	-	-	38.4	28.8	26.8	-	-	37.6	36.9	32.8	-	-	46.7	36.9	32.8
Others	5.4	1.8	0.9	1.8	-	6.3	4.8	3.2	3.3	3.3	4.1	0.8	5.7	3.3	3.3

G - general information
F - price information
Q - information on quality
P - fiber content information
C - cleaning information

Blanket and drapery buyers relied mostly on their experience in assessing the quality of products. For blanket buyers, friends were the next most frequently checked sources, while friends, salespeople and catalogs were the next most frequently checked sources reported by drapery buyers. For upholstered furniture buyers, salespeople was the most frequently checked source category and own experience, friends and catalogs were the next most frequently checked sources.

Labels were the most frequently checked sources of fiber content information by purchasers of all three product categories. For both blanket and drapery buyers, own experience, catalogs and salespeople were the next most frequently checked sources. Other sources reported by blanket buyers were local district home economists and the radio, while home decorators and district home economists were other sources reported by drapery purchasers. For upholstered furniture buyers, salespeople and own experience were the next most frequently checked sources after labels. Other sources included district home economists, television advertisements and workshops organized by professional upholsterers.

A great number of buyers of blankets, drapery and upholstered furniture checked labels as the most frequently consulted sources of cleaning information. For blanket buyers, own experience and friends were the next most frequently checked sources. For drapery and upholstered furniture buyers, own experience and salespeople were the next most frequently checked sources. Other sources reported by upholstered furniture buyers included district home economists, television advertisements and advice from professional upholstery cleaners.

Table XIII shows the responses to the Likert scales which measure the usefulness of different sources of information in providing information about price, quality, fiber content and cleaning instructions of blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture.

Catalogs were agreed to by at least 65% of buyers of blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture as useful sources of price information. The sources which received the next highest percentage of agreement from buyers of these products were advertisements. Almost 55% of upholstered furniture buyers agreed with the usefulness of the salespeople as sources of price information.

A majority of buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture agreed with the usefulness of friends as sources of information on quality. In all three product categories, at least one-third of the buyers disagreed with the usefulness of advertisements as sources of information on quality.

When seeking information about fiber content, catalogs received the highest percentage of agreement in the blanket category. Labels were strongly agreed to by almost 44% of the blanket buyers as useful sources of fiber content information. For drapery buyers, again, catalogs were the sources agreed to as useful by a majority of the buyers. The only source which was strongly agreed to by drapery buyers as useful was labels. In the upholstered furniture category, almost 46% of the buyers agreed with the usefulness of salespeople as sources of fiber content information. Almost 54% of the buyers also agreed with the usefulness of catalogs as sources of fiber content

Table XIII
Percentage Distribution of the Usefulness of Different Sources in
Providing Information About Price, Quality, Fiber Content and Cleaning Instructions
Per Different Products

	Blanket n=110						Drapery n=121						Upholstered Furniture n=117					
	SD	D	H	A	SA	MA	SD	D	H	A	SA	MA	SD	D	H	A	SA	MA
PRICE																		
Advertisements	0.9	15.6	16.5	56.9	8.3	1.8	0.8	21.3	22.1	48.4	6.6	0.8	0.8	9.3	17.8	57.6	13.6	0.8
Catalogs	-	3.7	11.9	65.1	18.3	0.9	-	3.3	10.6	70.7	13.8	1.6	-	2.6	11.1	66.7	17.9	1.7
Friends	-	9.3	40.2	37.4	9.3	3.7	1.6	14.5	26.6	46.0	8.1	3.2	-	15.3	39.8	39.0	4.2	1.7
Consumer Reports	-	7.4	22.2	38.0	20.4	12.0	0.9	5.1	31.6	41.0	12.8	8.5	-	3.3	32.5	40.4	15.8	7.9
QUALITY																		
Advertisements	10.0	35.5	36.4	15.5	0.9	1.8	9.8	34.1	35.0	17.9	0.8	2.4	8.4	42.0	26.9	18.5	1.7	2.5
Catalogs	5.4	27.9	31.5	30.6	2.7	1.8	2.5	24.8	30.6	39.7	1.7	0.8	4.2	32.5	24.2	33.3	3.3	2.5
Friends	-	4.6	14.7	60.6	17.4	2.8	1.7	9.1	24.0	49.6	13.2	2.5	0.8	9.3	28.8	50.8	9.5	0.8
Consumer Reports	0.9	0.9	23.4	43.9	21.5	9.3	-	5.7	22.1	45.9	18.0	8.2	-	0.9	23.5	43.5	22.6	9.4
CONTENT																		
Advertisements	3.7	16.5	23.9	49.5	5.5	0.9	3.3	24.0	24.8	41.3	2.5	4.1	5.3	33.6	24.8	34.5	1.8	-
Catalogs	1.8	5.5	13.8	66.1	10.1	2.8	-	4.0	16.9	69.4	8.1	1.6	-	15.3	22.0	54.2	6.8	1.7
Friends	2.8	15.7	39.8	29.6	6.5	5.6	1.7	22.3	34.7	31.4	5.0	5.0	1.7	20.7	44.0	30.2	2.6	0.9
Consumer Reports	-	0.9	14.8	50.9	22.2	11.1	-	0.8	24.0	47.1	19.0	9.0	-	0.9	27.4	42.5	22.1	7.1
CLEANING METHODS																		
Advertisements	10.0	42.7	30.0	14.5	-	2.7	5.7	41.0	32.0	17.2	0.8	3.3	0.9	12.0	21.4	34.2	9.5	0.9
Catalogs	5.5	35.5	17.3	39.1	1.8	0.9	1.6	22.8	22.0	48.0	4.1	0.8	2.6	36.2	26.7	25.9	6.0	2.6
Salicaperon	3.6	25.5	31.8	32.7	5.5	0.9	7.6	14.4	32.2	39.8	5.1	0.8	0.8	16.8	26.9	47.9	6.7	0.8
Friends	0.9	9.9	29.8	45.9	10.8	3.6	0.8	14.8	32.0	43.4	6.6	2.5	0.9	11.1	35.0	43.6	7.7	1.7
Labels	-	2.7	2.7	52.3	42.3	-	-	1.6	5.7	53.3	39.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Consumer Reports	0.9	2.8	31.5	33.3	22.2	9.3	-	0.8	30.0	39.2	19.2	10.8	-	1.8	28.9	44.7	15.8	8.8

SD - strongly disagree H - neutral SA - strongly agree
D - disagree A - agree MA - not applicable

information. Over one-third of the buyers disagreed with the usefulness of advertisements as useful sources of fiber content information while another 35% of the buyers agreed with their usefulness.

Over half of the blanket and drapery buyers agreed with the usefulness of labels as sources of cleaning information. For a majority of blanket buyers, friends were considered useful sources of information on cleaning. Almost 43% of the buyers disagreed that advertisements were useful sources. For drapery buyers, catalogs were sources agreed to as useful after labels. Over 40% of the buyers disagreed with the usefulness of advertisements as sources of cleaning information. A majority of the upholstered furniture buyers agreed with the usefulness of salespeople as sources of cleaning information, followed by Consumer Reports and friends.

Table XIV shows the responses to the Likert scales which measure the extent to which respondents wish to be able to identify flame-retardant textile products. Almost 90% of the respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they would like to be able to identify flame-retardant textile products. While the majority of respondents strongly agreed that they would like to be able to identify flame-retardant blankets or draperies, the majority of respondents only agreed that they would like to be able to identify flame-retardant upholstered furniture.

Table XIV

Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Desire
to Identify Flame-Retardant Textile Products

	WOULD LIKE TO IDENTIFY FR TEXTILE PRODUCTS				
	SD	D	N	A	SA
Blanket n=189	0.5	2.6	5.8	41.8	47.6
Draperies n=185	-	2.2	4.3	45.9	47.6
Upholstered Furniture n=187	-	1.6	3.2	49.2	45.5

Table XV shows the sources from which respondents preferred to obtain flame-retardance information. At least 50% of the respondents who answered the questions on flame-retardant information sources strongly agreed that they would like a label representing flame retardance sewn on to the textile product. Almost 47% of the respondents also strongly agreed that they would like a flame-retardance symbol printed on the blanket packages. Displays of flame-retardant products and reading about them in newspapers were the least preferred sources in all three product categories.

Table XV
Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Preference for Flame-Retardance Information Sources

	Blanket n-189					Drapery n-185					Upholstered Furniture n-187				
	SD	D	N	A	SA	SD	D	N	A	SA	SD	D	N	A	SA
Read in newspapers	4.7	14.8	33.1	40.2	5.9	4.9	16.5	26.8	46.3	4.3	4.2	15.5	26.8	44.0	7.1
FR symbol on the package	1.7	4.5	7.3	39.3	47.2	2.3	3.4	2.9	54.3	37.1	1.7	6.8	4.5	50.3	35.6
FR label sewn on the product	0.5	0.5	3.2	30.6	65.1	-	3.3	3.8	37.7	55.2	-	1.6	4.9	38.4	55.1
Displays	2.3	14.9	32.8	41.4	7.5	1.2	13.1	31.0	40.5	10.7	1.2	9.2	35.8	39.9	11.6
Pamphlets	1.1	4.5	24.2	45.5	24.7	0.6	4.1	19.3	48.5	25.7	0.6	5.8	14.5	53.2	24.9

SD - strongly disagree
D - disagree
N - neutral
A - agree
SA - strongly agree

Testing of Null Hypotheses

Level of Education and Types and Sources of Information

Null Hypothesis 1: No significant association exists between a consumer's level of education and

- a. the types of information sought
- b. the sources of information used.

Table XVI shows the results of chi-square analyses performed to test null hypothesis 1a for each of the three product categories. Six categories of education had to be combined into two to carry out the analyses because there were cases in which the expected cell frequencies were less than five¹. As a result of combining the categories, 2x2 tables were cross-tabulated. The Yates' corrected chi-square was automatically computed by the SPSS subprogram crosstabs if any expected cell frequency was less than five (Nie, Hull, Jenkins, Steinbrenner and Bent, 1975). There was no significant association between a consumer's level of education and whether or not the individual sought any of the four types of information in any of the three product categories.

¹ Respondents who had completed up to Grade 10, completed high school, or completed trade or business school were combined into one category. Those who completed technical college, who had a bachelor's degree or advanced degrees were combined to form the second category.

Table XVI
Association Between Education of Purchasers of
Different Products and Usage of Types of Information

	TYPES OF INFORMATION			
	Price	Quality	Fiber Content	Cleaning
Blanket Purchasers n=98	$\chi^2=0.0199$ p =0.8877	$\chi^2=0.0097$ p =0.9216	$\chi^2=0.0050$ p =0.9440	$\chi^2=0.1512$ p =0.6794
Drapery Purchasers n=113	$\chi^2=0.5255$ p =0.4685	$\chi^2=0.8458$ p =0.3578	$\chi^2=3.4382$ p =0.0637	$\chi^2=1.2351$ p =0.2892
Upholstered Furniture Purchasers n=113	$\chi^2=0.0754$ p =0.7836	$\chi^2=0.2727$ p =0.6015	$\chi^2=0.4107$ p =0.5392	$\chi^2=0.4107$ p =0.5216

For purchasers of both blankets and draperies, chi-square analyses showed no significant association between use of any information source and a consumer's education level. For the sample of upholstered furniture buyers, use of one source was found to be significantly associated with education: own experience as a source of information on quality ($\chi^2=4.81$, $p=0.03$). Further examination of the data revealed that consumers in the higher education category were less likely to seek information on quality by referring to their own experience. Chi-square tables for these analyses are located in Appendix III.

Income and Types and Sources of Information

Null Hypothesis 2: No significant association exists between a consumer's income and

- the types of information sought.
- the sources of information used.

Chi-square was used to test these null hypotheses.

Table XVII shows the results of the analyses for null hypothesis 2a. Eight income categories were combined into three to offset the effects of insufficient expected cell frequencies². There was no significant association between the income of blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture buyers and whether or not they sought any of the four types of information. Null hypothesis 2a is therefore not rejected.

Table XVII
Association Between Income of Purchasers of
Different Products and Usage of Types of Information

	TYPES OF INFORMATION			
	Price	Quality	Fiber Content	Cleaning
Blanket Purchasers n=104	$\chi^2=1.86069$ p =0.3944	$\chi^2=1.3601$ p =0.5066	$\chi^2=1.0443$ p =0.5933	$\chi^2=0.6998$ p =0.7048
Drapery Purchasers n=120	$\chi^2=4.74553$ p =0.0932	$\chi^2=0.99717$ p =0.6074	$\chi^2=3.8203$ p =0.1481	$\chi^2=4.0355$ p =0.1330
Upholstered Furniture Purchasers n=120	$\chi^2=1.3867$ p =0.4999	$\chi^2=1.4354$ p =0.4879	$\chi^2=0.7188$ p =0.6981	$\chi^2=0.6492$ p =0.7228

²The three combined income groups were: 1. under \$10,000 to \$19,999, 2. \$20,000 to \$34,999, 3. \$35,999 to \$40,000 and over.

The chi-square analyses used to test null hypothesis 2b showed that in the purchase of blankets, none of the sources was found to be significantly related to a consumer's income. For drapery buyers, several sources were found to be significantly related to income ($p \leq 0.05$). These were friends as sources of price, fiber content and cleaning information; catalogs as sources of price information and labels and own experience as sources of fiber content information. Consumers who were in the middle income category (\$20,000 to \$34,999) were more likely to seek price information from catalogs ($\chi^2=6.33$, $p=0.04$). Consumers who were in the lower income category (under \$10,000 to \$19,999) were more likely to seek fiber content information either from labels or through their own experience. For upholstered furniture purchasers, usage of one information source was significantly associated with income ($\chi^2=6.53$, $p=0.04$). Further examination of data revealed that consumers who were in the middle income category were more likely to seek price information from the salespeople. Null hypothesis 2b is therefore not rejected for the blanket sample. Chi-square tables for these analyses are located in Appendix III.

Education and Information-Seeking

Null Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in

- a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visited
- among consumers of different levels of education.

One-way analysis of variance was used to test these null hypotheses. The analyses (Table XVIII) showed no significant difference in the number of information sources used by consumers of different education levels. The analyses also showed that there was no significant difference in the number of stores visited by consumers of different education levels. Null hypothesis 3a and 3b are therefore not rejected for all three product categories.

Table XVIII
Differences in Information-Seeking Among Buyers in Different Education Categories

	n	NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES		NUMBER OF STORES	
		F Ratio	p	F Ratio	p
Blanket Purchasers	108	0.618	0.7154	0.792	0.5783
Drapery Purchasers	125	0.855	0.5360	0.681	0.6653
Upholstered Furniture Purchasers	121	0.658	0.6835	0.734	0.6233

Income and Information-Seeking

Null Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in

- a. the number of information sources used, or
 - b. the number of stores visited
- among consumers in different income levels.

One-way analysis of variance was used to test each of these null hypotheses. Results of the analyses (Table XIX) showed no significant difference in either the number of information sources used or the number of stores visited by consumers in different income groups. Null hypotheses 4a and 4b are therefore not rejected.

Table XIX
Differences in Information-Seeking Among Buyers in Different Income Categories

	n	NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES		NUMBER OF STORES	
		F Ratio	p	F Ratio	p
Blanket Purchasers	105	0.588	0.7646	1.511	0.1730
Drapery Purchasers	122	0.667	0.6993	0.757	0.6245
Upholstered Furniture Purchasers	118	0.895	0.5134	1.430	0.2021

Product Price and Information-Seeking

Null Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference in

- a. the number of information sources used, or
- b. the number of stores visited

by consumers purchasing products in different price categories.

One-way analysis of variance was used to test these null hypotheses. Results of the analyses (Table XX) showed no significant difference in the number of information sources used by consumers of products in different price categories. Null hypothesis 1a is therefore not rejected for all three product categories. The analyses also showed no significant difference in the number of stores visited by consumers of products in different price categories with the exception of the upholstered furniture sample. A Scheffé posteriori contrast test (Kirk, 1968) was performed on the upholstered furniture data, but it failed to differentiate the significant categories. Further examination of data revealed that consumers who paid between \$550 to \$749.99 visited a greater number of stores, followed by those who paid over \$950 and those who paid \$750 to \$949.99. Those who paid the two lowest price ranges visited a smaller number of stores. Null hypothesis 5b is therefore not rejected for the blanket and drapery sample, but rejected in the upholstered furniture sample.

Table XX
Differences in Information-Seeking Among Buyers
Who Paid Different Prices

	n	NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES		NUMBER OF STORES	
		F Ratio	p	F Ratio	p
Blanket Purchasers	107	0.728	0.6042	1.190	0.3195
Drapery Purchasers	123	1.018	0.4010	1.914	0.1130
Upholstered Furniture Purchasers	120	0.810	0.5447	2.688	0.0252*

*p < 0.05

Purchase Experience and Information-Seeking

Null Hypothesis 6: No significant relationship exists between a consumer's purchase experience and

- the number of information sources used, or
- the number of stores visited.

Pearson's r was used to test these null hypotheses (Table XXI).

There was a significant positive correlation between the number of previous drapery purchases and the number of information sources sought by drapery buyers ($r=0.1558$, $p=0.04$). There was no significant correlation between the number of information sources used and the number of blanket or upholstered furniture purchases buyers had made. There was no significant correlation between the number of stores

visited and the number of blanket, drapery or upholstered furniture purchases made. Null hypothesis 6a is therefore rejected in the drapery sample, but accepted in the blanket and upholstered furniture samples, while null hypothesis 6b is not rejected.

Table XXI
Correlation Between Purchase Experience and
Information-Seeking of Buyers of Different Products

	NUMBER OF INFORMATION SOURCES	NUMBER OF STORES
Blanket n=110	r=0.1292 p=0.0890	r=0.0303 p=0.3780
Drapery n=124	r=0.1558 p=0.0420*	r=0.1080 p=0.1210
Upholstered Furniture n=120	r=0.0055 p=0.4760	r=0.0916 p=0.1740

*p < 0.05

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, the findings outlined in the previous chapter will be discussed with reference to the objectives of the study and related literature.

The Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) model of consumer behavior was used as the conceptual framework for this study. Information input, decision process stages and internalized environmental influences were relevant sections of the model for this study. Consumers who participated in this study were asked to recall their prepurchase search activities which included the types and sources of information they had used.

Types and Sources of Information

The first objective was to determine which of price, fiber content, quality and cleaning information buyers sought most when they purchased blankets, draperies or upholstered furniture. In the sample of blanket buyers, price information was most frequently sought, followed by information on cleaning methods, fiber content and quality. Only three of the 112 buyers mentioned flame-retardance as an important feature to consider when purchasing blankets. For drapery buyers, price was again the most frequently sought information, followed by cleaning methods, fiber content and quality. Flame-retardance was mentioned by four of the 126 buyers as an important

feature to consider. Upholstered furniture buyers sought price information most often, followed by quality, fiber content and cleaning methods. Flame-retardance was mentioned by nine of the 122 buyers as important features to consider.

Objective 2a was to determine the sources of information consumers used in the purchase of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture, and the types of information available from these sources. Blanket buyers obtained information on quality mostly by referring to their own experience or from consumer-oriented sources. Information about fiber content was sought through neutral sources, own experience or marketer-dominated sources. Cleaning information was obtained mostly from neutral sources, own experience or consumer-oriented sources. It seemed that information about fiber content, quality and cleaning instructions - the functional aspects of a product - were sought mostly from either neutral or consumer-oriented sources. Buyers' own experience also played a role as a source of information about quality. Marketer-dominated sources were used most extensively in obtaining price information.

Drapery buyers obtained price information mostly from marketer-dominated sources. Information on quality was obtained mostly from own experience or consumer-oriented sources. Fiber content and cleaning information was obtained largely from neutral sources or own experience. Again, neutral sources and own experience were dominant sources when the functional aspects of a product were concerned.

Upholstered furniture buyers obtained price information mostly from marketer-dominated sources. Information on quality was sought through marketer-dominated or consumer-oriented sources. Fiber content and cleaning information was obtained from neutral sources or marketer-dominated sources. It seemed that neutral and marketer-dominated sources were more frequently used to obtain information about the functional aspects of the product. The marketer-dominated source for functional characteristics of upholstered furniture was predominantly the salesperson whereas the predominant marketer sources for price information were store visits or advertisements. This seemed to contradict O'Brien's (1972) finding that when functional criteria of a product were dominant in a decision, the importance of the salesperson decreased.

The sources from which buyers in this study sought different types of information were quite similar to those reported by LeGrand and Udell (1964), and Newman and Staelin (1973).

Some of the buyers used previous experience as a source of information. This can be explained by the Howard-Sheth theory - that a consumer learns to buy. In all three product categories, fiber content and cleaning information were sought by reference to the buyer's own experience. Since the effect of fiber content and cleaning on the product's performance could not be assessed until after the product was used for some time, performance results for the product became experience which was accumulated through time. If a product of a certain fiber content did not perform as well as expected, or if a

certain cleaning method was not effective, buyers would avoid the information sources which had led to the adoption of that particular fiber content or cleaning instruction. The reliance on experience also lends support to the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) theory of internal search.

Although fiber content labels and care labels were the most frequently sought sources of fiber content and cleaning information for each product category, only about 50% of the buyers who looked for fiber content or care instructions sought the information from labels. This may be a reflection of the effectiveness of labels in dispensing fiber content or care information for the products in this study.

The reliance on the salesperson for information in the drapery and upholstered furniture categories was noteworthy. Quality, fiber content and cleaning information were sought frequently from the salesperson. A possible reason is perhaps due to the more complex nature of the products themselves. Both draperies and upholstered furniture have components other than textile to complement their functions. If a buyer wishes to gain understanding of the effects of all these components to assess the overall quality of the product, seeking advice from the salesperson becomes inevitable.

Usefulness of Information Sources

Objective 2b was to determine the usefulness of different sources in providing information on price, fiber content, quality and

cleaning. Catalogs and advertisements, which were the most frequently sought sources of price information for the three product categories, were also useful sources of price information. The salesperson was also a useful source of price information for buyers of upholstered furniture.

The salesperson's role in dispensing price information could be attributed to the inherent responsibility of the furniture salesperson to approach customers, so that although buyers did not voluntarily seek price information from the salesperson, contact with the salesperson was likely during the buying process. In addition, the purchase of upholstered furniture often involves fairly complex financial transactions and buyers often need the assistance of the salesperson to complete such transactions.

Friends, Consumer Reports and catalogs were useful sources of quality information for buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture. The Howard-Sheth learning theory could be used to explain the consistent agreement that friends were useful sources - a buyer could learn from the experience of friends.

While friends were one of the most frequently sought source and one which was considered useful, Consumer Reports was considered a useful source of information even though it was not a frequently sought information source. A possible explanation for such occurrence was that due to the manner in which the questions were asked in the instrument, respondents might have perceived Consumer Reports to be a useful source of information on quality when in fact they had not used it themselves.

Labels, catalogs, Consumer Reports and advertisements were useful sources of fiber content information for blanket and drapery buyers. Salespeople, catalogs and friends were useful sources of fiber content information for buyers of upholstered furniture. Almost one-third of the upholstered furniture buyers disagreed with the usefulness of advertisements as sources of fiber content information, but another one-third of the buyers agreed that they were useful. Although labels were considered useful sources for blanket and drapery buyers, the percentage agreement was not high. This may reflect possible problems with the buyer's ability to interpret labels or the absence of labels on most draperies.

Consumer Reports was not a frequently sought source of fiber content information, but buyers still considered it useful. The explanation for this has been discussed above. In the sample of upholstered furniture buyers, the role of the salesperson was outstanding; possible explanations have already been discussed.

Labels, friends, catalogs and Consumer Reports were considered useful sources of cleaning information for blanket buyers. Catalogs, however, were also not considered useful by some of the blanket buyers. Advertisements were also not considered useful. For drapery buyers, labels, catalogs, friends, salespeople and Consumer Reports were all useful sources. Salespeople, Consumer Reports and friends were useful sources to upholstered furniture buyers while advertisements and catalogs were not useful. Labels were considered useful, but only by about half of the buyers. This

may again reflect how well care instructions were interpreted by buyers. The predominance of friends as a useful source can be explained by the Howard-Sheth theory of learning previously discussed. The role of the salesperson has also been discussed. It seemed that advertisements, which were not frequently sought information sources, were also not considered useful by many of the buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture.

In summary, price was the most frequently sought type of information for all three product categories. Use of other types of information - quality, fiber content and cleaning instructions varied with the product. Marketer-dominated sources were useful in providing price information whereas neutral or consumer-oriented sources were useful in providing information about functional aspects of a product. Responses to the usefulness of labels led to some suspicions about their effectiveness.

Objective 2c was to explore the preferences for flame-retardant information sources. The majority of the sample expressed a desire to be able to identify flame-retardant textile products. When they were asked to indicate their preferences, one potential information source received outstandingly strong agreement - a flame-retardance label sewn on to products. A symbol representing flame-retardance printed on the package also received considerable agreement. However, the usefulness of labels expressed by respondents raises doubts as to whether or not they would find such labels useful if flame-retardance labels were introduced. In addition,

funding for the introduction of flame-retardance labels may be a difficult obstacle to overcome because it may entail a willingness on the part of the federal government to provide funds for the implementation of a labelling program. It may also entail a willingness on the manufacturer's part to implement such an undertaking. Even if funding is available, much of the cost of introducing flame-retardance labels will likely be passed on to the consumer in the form of higher prices. This may affect the consumer's willingness to purchase flame-retardant textile products.

Types and Sources of Information
in Relation to Education and Income

The third objective was to investigate relationships between types and sources of information the buyer used and the level of education and income. Null hypotheses 1a, 1b, 2a and 2b were formulated to meet this objective. Null hypotheses 1a and 2a were not rejected. There were no significant associations between types and sources of information used and the buyer's level of education and income. A possible explanation is that blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture were not frequently purchased goods. The time span between the present and the last purchase could be quite long; therefore, information that was obtained from the last purchase could not be recalled, and consequently, the buyer had to start the information-seeking process afresh despite the individual's economic

background or ability to comprehend certain information.

For null hypothesis 1b, use of own experience as a source of information on quality by buyers of upholstered furniture was significantly associated with education. Further examination of the data revealed that buyers in the high education category were less likely to seek information on quality through their own experience. One of the factors which affects use of information, as described by Andreasen and Ratchford (1976) and O'Brien (1972) is the ability to obtain and use information. The better educated buyers in this study might be more capable of understanding more complex quality-related information, therefore, they did not have to rely on their own experience.

For null hypothesis 2b, usage of several sources was significantly associated with income of drapery buyers. Buyers in the middle income category were more likely to seek price, fiber content and cleaning information from friends than buyers in other income categories. The importance of aesthetics in the purchase of draperies may be a reason for these buyers seeking advice from friends.

More drapery buyers in the middle income group used catalogs as sources of price information. The ease of access to catalogs might well be the reason for it. Drapery buyers in the lower income group were more likely to use their own experience for fiber content information. Goldman's (1978) limited shopping scope could be used to explain this association. Low income buyers of this study might have a limited shopping scope with less knowledge of the market-

place; therefore, they had to rely on their experience more often. Drapery buyers who were in the low income category were also more likely to use labels as sources of fiber content information. Limited resources might have caused these buyers to be more discriminating with their choices. For upholstered furniture buyers, those in the high and low income categories were less likely to seek price information from salespeople than buyers in the middle income category.

In summary, there were few significant associations between usage of types and sources of information and either the consumer's education or income level. Further examination of data, however, suggested that usage of types and sources of information by consumers who participated in this study approximated several researchers' postulations.

Extent of Information-Seeking in Relation to Education, Income, Purchase Experience and Cost of the Product

According to the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) model of consumer behavior, the search for information begins after a consumer recognizes a need for a certain commodity. In this study, certain factors were proposed to have an effect on search activities. These factors were the buyer's income and level of education, cost of a product and experience in purchasing similar products. Income and education are internalized environmental influences in the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat model. Experience is considered stored information which can affect problem recognition. Cost of a product

is considered an element of risk.

Objective 4 was to investigate relationship between extent of information-seeking and the buyer's level of education, income, purchase experience and cost of the product. Null hypotheses 3, 4, 5 and 6 were formulated to meet this objective.

Null hypotheses 3 and 4 were not rejected. The fact that for all three product categories, there was no significant difference in either the number of stores visited or the number of information sources used by buyers with different levels of education or income contradicted several researchers' findings (Katona and Mueller, 1955; Newman and Staelin, 1973; Andreasen and Ratchford, 1976). There are three possible explanations.

The first explanation is that these products have long life cycles; therefore, the amount of retained information from the last purchase was minimal. When a buyer contemplated a purchase, the individual was likely to face new product varieties which were not available in the last purchase. Consequently, a buyer would have to start in the information-seeking process afresh.

A second possible explanation is that a considerable proportion of respondents lived in either a town, village or farm. Access to stores or information sources could be greatly limited by the area of residence. Results of two-way analysis of variance, however, failed to support this explanation.

This project was not designed to study general motivating influences and product brand evaluations. These are considered as

two types of intervening variables between internalized environmental influences and the decision process stages in the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat model. Any of these elements could have interfered with the supposed relationships between education, income and information-seeking.

For null hypothesis 5a, there was a significant difference in the number of stores visited by buyers who purchased upholstered furniture of different price categories. Further examination of data revealed that those who paid higher prices tended to visit a greater number of stores. These buyers might have perceived a monetary risk when the cost of the upholstered furniture was high, therefore, they might have visited more stores to compare prices in order to pick the best buy. This agrees with the findings of Newman and Staelin (1975).

Of the three product categories, upholstered furniture was the only product for which a significant difference was found in the number of stores visited by buyers who paid different price categories. Upon further examination of the data, a majority of blanket and drapery buyers paid in the middle or middle-to-lower price ranges. Most of the upholstered furniture buyers paid the middle or higher price ranges. Most of the buyers of drapery and blankets reported that the prices that they paid were about the same as they had expected to pay. If buyers perceived high cost as a risk, they would have sought more information to reduce this potential risk, but since the prices paid were what they had expected to pay, the amount of perceived

risk was reduced and therefore, further effort to seek more information might not be necessary. On the contrary, for the upholstered furniture buyers, one-third of them reported that the price they paid was higher than expected. This fact alone might cause consumers to seek more information. Additional data analysis showed a significant association between the price upholstered furniture buyers expected to pay and the number of information sources used ($\chi^2=26.26$, $p=0.02$). Since upholstered furniture was the product that had the highest relative price among the three products selected for this study, the perception of risk might have been more prominent in this product category.

For null hypothesis 6a, a significant relationship was found between the number of previous drapery purchases and the number of information sources used. A scattergram of the relationship between the two variables suggested that there was a slight tendency for the number of information sources to increase as the number of previous purchases increased. A possible explanation is that as the number of previous purchases increased, a buyer became more aware of the availability of different sources, so that when a drapery purchase was contemplated, the individual already knew of possible information sources that were accumulated through previous experience.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study suggest that usage of different types of information is dependent on the product. The pattern of information source usage lends support to the Howard-Sheth theory of learning, the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) theory of internal search and Goldman's limited scope theory. Other researchers' findings with respect to effects of education and income on prepurchase search (Katona and Mueller, 1955; Newman and Staelin, 1972; Andreasen and Ratchford, 1976) were not supported by the findings of this study. The possible influence of risk on prepurchase search (Bucklin, 1966; Brown and Gentry, 1975) was substantiated.

A consumer will most likely seek price information when a purchase is first contemplated. Then, depending on the product, a consumer may perceive the appropriateness of other types of information differently, and hence, a consumer's propensity to seek a certain type of information varies with the product that is to be purchased.

Usage of information sources varies with the attributes of a product. In this study, information about functional aspects of a product was obtained from sources different from those from which price information was obtained.

The recurring discrepancy between actual usage of Consumer Reports as an information source and its usefulness as expressed by respondents of this study suggests that the consumer perceived Consumer

Reports to be a potentially useful source, but since using this information source requires an expenditure of money or time on the part of the consumer, willingness to seek information from Consumer Reports is perhaps deterred.

Although income and education were found by several researchers to affect prepurchase search, these factors did not affect information-seeking among consumers who participated in this study. Demographic variables such as income and education may not directly affect prepurchase search because there are many psychological variables (as illustrated in the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat model) that were not accounted for. In addition, interpurchase time could have contributed to the lack of significant findings.

Purchase experience was shown to have a significant correlation with information-seeking. Increased purchase experience may not necessarily lead to decreased information-seeking. Purchase experience can possibly widen a consumer's shopping scope by enhancing the individual's awareness of alternative information sources.

Cost of product was found to be significantly related to information-seeking for the product which had the highest relative price ranges. This suggests that perceived risk of monetary loss due to an unsound purchase decision is greater if the purchase is a reasonably large expenditure.

With respect to flame-retardance information sources, respondents of this study preferred to identify flame-retardant textile products through symbols of some type. The findings with

respect to usefulness of labels and their frequency of use cast considerable doubt on the feasibility of introducing flame-retardance labels. Although respondents expressed a desire to be able to identify flame-retardant textile products and indicated preferences for specific information sources for flame-retardant textile products, respondents may not necessarily behave in a manner consistent with their expressed preferences.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this study was to examine sources of information that consumers used in the purchase of home furnishing textile products, namely blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture.

The Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) model of consumer behavior was used as the conceptual framework for this study. The decision process stages, information input and internalized environmental influences were sections of the model which pertained directly to this study.

A cluster sample of 1,000 urban and rural residents of the province of Alberta were selected. The response rate was 20%. Descriptive analyses such as frequencies and percentage distributions were used to describe the sample and the different variables. To test null hypotheses, one-way analysis of variance, Pearson product moment correlation and chi-square statistics were used.

Types of information sought by blanket and drapery buyers were, in order of frequency, price, cleaning instructions, fiber content and quality. Upholstered furniture buyers sought, in order of frequency, information on price, quality, fiber content and cleaning instructions.

Price information was most frequently sought by buyers of blanket, drapery and upholstered furniture. They tended to seek price information by browsing through stores and going through retail store catalogs. These buyers sought cleaning information by reading labels.

Fiber content information was most frequently sought by reading labels on products. Drapery and blanket buyers referred to their own experience for information on quality while upholstered furniture buyers sought information on quality mostly from the salesperson.

For buyers of blankets, draperies and upholstered furniture, catalogs and advertisements were useful sources of price information. Catalogs and labels were useful sources of fiber content information to drapery buyers. Salesperson and catalogs were useful sources of fiber content information for upholstered furniture buyers.

There was no significant difference among buyers with different income and education levels with respect to the number of information sources used and the number of stores visited.

There was no significant association between the types of information sought and either the buyer's level of education or income. Usage of several information sources found to be significantly related to the buyer's level of education and income.

No significant difference was found in the number of information sources used or the number of stores visited by purchasers of blankets and draperies who paid different prices, while buyers of upholstered furniture who paid different prices differed significantly in the number of stores visited.

There was no significant relationship between purchase experience of blanket and upholstered furniture buyers, and either the number of information sources used or the number of stores visited. The drapery buyers exhibited a significant positive correlation between

purchase experience and the number of information sources used.

The majority of the respondents expressed a desire to be able to identify flame-retardant textile products. Two sources were preferred by most respondents - a label representing flame-retardance sewn onto the product and a symbol representing flame-retardance printed on the package of textile products.

Implications for Further Research

Information-seeking activities of buyers of three products were examined in this study. The manner in which the data was coded restricted the statistical analyses to be carried out for each individual product category. By recoding the data, a cross-product comparison may be carried out to examine information search activities in relation to product characteristics.

No significant association was found between information-seeking and either income or education. The proportion of rural residents was thought to have been a factor. A comparison of information-seeking between urban and rural clusters may give valuable indications for educators.

The response rate of this study was 20%. No reminders were sent out after the initial mailing. Since the clusters were spread out over the province of Alberta, the researcher's control over the response rate was very limited. One way to alleviate this obstacle might be to seek the co-operation of district home economists to administer the testing. By doing so, however, consumers who normally would not

respond may feel obliged to respond, and thus, introducing the possibility of a biased sample.

Implications for Consumer Education

Internal search and consumer-oriented sources were found to be information sources for many consumers who participated in this study. Research into the effects of a consumer's own experience with textile products and the transmission of experience through interpersonal communication on decision-making can serve an important purpose.

In the Engel, Blackwell and Kollat (1978) model of consumer behavior, reference groups can affect a consumer's intention to buy. Interpersonal communication can shape a consumer's beliefs and attitudes toward textile products. An understanding of the intricacies of a consumer's own experience and experience learned vicariously through interpersonal communication can help marketers and educators identify some factors which contribute to attitude formation. This is particularly important when educating consumers about textile flammability. Research into a consumer's attitude towards flammability with some attention allotted to the consumer's experience with textile-related fires will give indications as to how experience affects awareness of flame-retardance. If a relationship exists, educators can enhance awareness of flammability of textiles by stressing the undesirable outcomes of textile-related fires and the safety aspects of flame-retardant products.

Consumers in this study tended to use neutral sources for performance information. Some neutral sources which can be used to dispense general information or textile flammability information are district home economists, resource centers (e.g., Consumer and Corporate Affairs) and television programs (e.g., Marketplace). In order for these programs to be effective, an initial effort must be made to point out the existence of such resources so that consumers become aware of the availability of these resources.

Respondents of this study seemed to prefer to identify flame-retardant textiles through symbols or labels. Research into the design of flame-retardance labels or symbols and the consumer's comprehension of them can be the first step to enhance awareness of textile flammability.

Since consumers who participated in this study did not seem to utilize labels extensively, problems with comprehension of labels were suspected. Research into a consumer's ability to process information on care and fiber content labels may pinpoint how effective these labels have been in helping the consumer to care for and identify textiles. Similarly, more extensive research into the usefulness of flame-retardance labels would be needed prior to the implementation of a labelling program.

Implications for Retail Store Management

The predominance of the salesperson in dispensing information in upholstered furniture purchases indicates that management of home

furnishing retail outlets could make an effort to educate their sales staff so that they could provide appropriate and accurate information to the consumer.

Home economists can play an important role in educating home furnishing salespeople. Home furnishing textiles workshops can be organized to help salespeople gain an understanding of textile properties. Such an undertaking could also be a valuable opportunity for home economists and consumer educators to demonstrate their potential as liaison between private business and the public.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX I

POOL OF URBAN CENTERS FROM WHICH URBAN CLUSTER
WAS SELECTED

U R B A N C E N T E R SCities

Medicine Hat
Lethbridge
Calgary
Red Deer
Camrose
Lloydminster
Edmonton
Wetaskiwin
Grande Prairie

Non-cities

Brooks
Coaldale
Raymond
Taber
Cardston
Claresholm
Nanton
Pincher Creek
Three Hills
Vulcan
Carstairs
Didsbury
High River
Olds
Castor
Provost
Stettler
Wainwright
Blackfalds
Innisfail
Lacombe
Ponoka
Rimbey
Rocky Mountain House
Sylvan Lake
Canmore
Vegreville
Vermilion
Viking
Devon
Drayton Valley
Fort Saskatchewan
Gibbons
Morinville
Spruce Grove

Stony Plain
Bonnyville
Cold Lake
Fort McMurray
Grand Centre
Lac La Biche
St. Paul
Barrhead
Mayerthorpe
Westlock
Edson
Hinton
Beaverlodge
Fairview
Falher
Grimshaw
High Prairie
Peace River
Slave Lake
Valleyview

APPENDIX II

PART A: BLANKETS

1. In the past five years, have you purchased any blankets?

___ a. yes
___ b. no

If your answer is yes, please go on to item 2.

If your answer is no, please go on to item 13 on page 3.

2. How many times in the past five years have you purchased a blanket?

___ a. once
___ b. twice
___ c. three times
___ d. four times
___ e. five times
___ f. more than five times, please specify _____

PLEASE INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT FACTORS IN THE PURCHASE OF A BLANKET BY PUTTING A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

3. Price is an important factor to consider when purchasing a blanket.

What blankets are made from is an important factor to consider when purchasing a blanket.

Warmth is an important factor to consider when purchasing a blanket.

The method of cleaning is an important factor to consider when purchasing a blanket.

Appearance is an important factor to consider when purchasing blankets.

- 3a. What are some other features that you would consider when buying a blanket?

4. When you started to consider buying the blanket you last purchased, you looked around for general information about blankets by: (please check the ones you consulted)

___ a. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
___ b. going through retail store catalogues
___ c. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
___ d. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
___ e. browsing through retail stores
___ f. calling textile specialists for advice
___ g. others, please specify _____
___ h. did not look for such information

5. The last time you purchased a blanket, how many stores did you visit before deciding which one to buy?

___ a. one
___ b. two
___ c. three
___ d. four
___ e. five
___ f. more than five, please specify _____
___ g. did not visit any stores but bought through catalogue shopping

- 6a. Before your last blanket purchase, did you check the price range for blankets before deciding which one to buy?

___ a. yes (please answer item 6b)
___ b. no (please go to item 7)

- 6b. You found out the price range for blankets by: (please check the ones you consulted)

___ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
___ ii. going through retail store catalogues
___ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
___ iv. asking salesperson
___ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
___ vi. browsing through stores
___ vii. others, please specify _____

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7. How much did you pay for the last blanket you bought?

- ☐ a. under \$10
- ☐ b. \$10 - \$19.99
- ☐ c. \$20 - \$29.99
- ☐ d. \$30 - \$39.99
- ☐ e. \$40 - \$49.99
- ☐ f. \$50 and over, please specify _____

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8. Did you consider the price you paid for the last blanket was:

- ☐ a. higher than you expected to pay
- ☐ b. about the same as you expected to pay
- ☐ c. lower than you expected to pay

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9a. Before your last purchase of a blanket, did you try to find information about how warm different blankets would be before you decided which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer item 9b)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 10)

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9b. You found out how warm different blankets would be by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. asking salesperson
- ☐ v. referring to your own experience with blankets you previously owned
- ☐ vi. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ vii. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ viii. others, please specify _____

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10a. Before your last blanket purchase, did you try to find information about what blankets are made from (i.e. fiber content such as wool, acrylic, etc.) before you decided which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer items 10b and 10c)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 11)

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10b. What were your reasons for checking what blankets are made from before you decided which one to buy?

10c. You found out information on what blankets are made from by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. asking salesperson
- ☐ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer & Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ vi. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ vii. checking labels on blankets
- ☐ viii. referring to your own experience with blankets you previously owned
- ☐ ix. other, please specify _____

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11a. Before your last blanket purchase, did you try to find information about how blankets can be cleaned?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer items 11b and 11c)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 12)

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11b. What were your reasons for checking the method of cleaning?

11c. You found information about how blankets can be cleaned by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ v. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ vi. checking labels on blankets
- ☐ vii. asking salesperson
- ☐ viii. referring to your own experience with blankets you previously owned
- ☐ ix. others, please specify _____

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PLEASE INDICATE THE USEFULNESS OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION BY PUTTING A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

12. Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about how warm blankets can be.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about how warm blankets can be.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about how warm blankets can be.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about how warm blankets can be.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about price range for blankets.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about price range for blankets.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about price range for blankets.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about price range for blankets.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about what blankets are made from (i.e. fiber content such as wool, acrylic, etc.).

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about what blankets are made from.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about what blankets are made from.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about what blankets are made from.

Labels attached to blankets provide useful information about what blankets are made from.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

Salesperson provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

Labels attached to blankets provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about cleaning methods for blankets.

PLEASE PUT A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

13. If a blanket is treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be able to identify it readily.

14. If a blanket is treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be informed about this special feature by:

- reading about it in newspaper or magazine advertisements
- a symbol that represents flame-retardance printed on the package
- a special label bearing a symbol that represents flame-retardance sewn onto the blanket
- looking at displays of flame-retardant blankets in retail stores
- reading materials, for example pamphlets, which explain the advantages and disadvantages of flame-retardant blankets

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree not applicable

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PLEASE GO ON TO PAGE 4.

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PART B: DRAPERIES

15. In the past five years, have you purchased any draperies?

- ___ a. yes
___ b. no

If your answer is yes, please go on to item 16.
If your answer is no, please go on to item 27 on page 6.

16. How many times in the past five years have you purchased draperies?

- ___ a. once
___ b. twice
___ c. three times
___ d. four times
___ e. five times
___ f. more than five times, please specify _____

PLEASE INDICATE THE IMPORTANCE OF DIFFERENT
FACTORS IN THE PURCHASE OF DRAPERIES BY PUTTING
A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES
HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

17. Price is an important factor to consider when purchasing draperies.

What draperies are made from (i.e. fiber content such as polyester, acrylic, etc.) is an important factor to consider when purchasing draperies.

Durability is an important factor to consider when purchasing draperies.

The method of cleaning is an important factor to consider when purchasing draperies.

Appearance is an important factor to consider when purchasing draperies.

17a. What are some other features that you would consider when buying draperies?

18. When you started to consider buying the draperies you last purchased, you looked around for general information about draperies by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ___ a. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
___ b. going through retail store catalogues
___ c. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
___ d. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
___ e. browsing through retail stores
___ f. calling textile specialists for advice
___ g. others, please specify _____
___ h. did not look for such information

19. The last time you purchased draperies, how many stores did you visit before deciding which ones to buy?

- ___ a. one
___ b. two
___ c. three
___ d. four
___ e. five
___ f. more than five, please specify _____
___ g. did not visit any stores but bought through catalogue shopping

20a. Before your last draperies purchase, did you check the price range for draperies before deciding which ones to buy?

- ___ a. yes (please answer 20b)
___ b. no (please go on to item 21)

20b. You found out the price range for draperies by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ___ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
___ ii. going through retail store catalogues
___ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
___ iv. asking salesperson
___ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
___ vi. browsing through stores
___ vii. others, please specify _____

strongly disagree
disagree
neutral
agree
strongly agree
not applicable

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21. How much did you pay for the last draperies you bought?

- ☐ a. under \$50
- ☐ b. \$50 - \$99.99
- ☐ c. \$100 - \$299.99
- ☐ d. \$300 - \$499.99
- ☐ e. \$500 and over, please specify _____

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22. Did you consider the price you paid for your last draperies was:

- ☐ a. higher than you expected to pay
- ☐ b. about the same as you expected to pay
- ☐ c. lower than you expected to pay

34

23a. Before your last purchase of draperies, did you try to find information about how durable different draperies would be before you decided which ones to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 23b)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 24)

35

23b. You found out how durable different draperies would be by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. asking salesperson
- ☐ v. referring to your own experience with draperies you previously owned
- ☐ vi. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ vii. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ viii. others, please specify _____

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24a. Before your last drapery purchase, did you try to find information about what draperies are made from (i.e. fiber content such as polyester, acrylic, etc.) before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 24b and 24c)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 25)

44

24b. What were your reasons for checking what draperies are made from before you decided which one to buy?

24c. You found out information about what draperies are made from by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. asking salesperson
- ☐ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ vi. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ vii. checking labels on the draperies
- ☐ viii. referring to your own experience with draperies you previously owned
- ☐ ix. others, please specify _____

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25a. Before your last drapery purchase, did you try to find information about how draperies can be cleaned before deciding which ones to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 25b and 25c)
- ☐ b. no (please go on to item 26)

54

25b. What were your reasons for checking the method of cleaning?

25c. You found information about how draperies can be cleaned by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
- ☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
- ☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
- ☐ iv. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
- ☐ v. calling textile specialists for advice
- ☐ vi. checking labels on draperies
- ☐ vii. asking salesperson
- ☐ viii. referring to your own experience with draperies you previously owned
- ☐ ix. others, please specify _____

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PLEASE INDICATE THE USEFULNESS OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION BY PUTTING A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

26. Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about how durable draperies can be.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about how durable draperies can be.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about how durable draperies can be.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about how durable draperies can be.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about price range for draperies.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about price range for draperies.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about price range for draperies.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about price range for draperies.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about what draperies are made from (i.e. fiber content such as polyester, acrylic, etc.).

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about what draperies are made from.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about what draperies are made from.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about what draperies are made from.

Labels attached to draperies provide useful information about what draperies are made from.

Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

Retail store catalogues provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

Salespersons provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

Labels attached to draperies provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about how draperies can be cleaned.

PLEASE PUT A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

27. If draperies are treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be able to identify it readily.

28. If draperies are treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be informed about this special feature by:

- reading about it in newspaper or magazine advertisements
- a symbol that represents flame-retardancy printed in the package
- a special label bearing a symbol that represents flame-retardancy sewn onto the draperies
- looking at displays of flame-retardant draperies in retail stores
- reading materials, for example pamphlets, which explain the advantages and disadvantages of flame-retardant draperies

PLEASE GO ON TO PAGE 7

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree not applicable

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PART C: UPHOLSTERY

29. In the past five years, have you purchased any upholstered furniture?

- ☐ a. yes
☐ b. no

13

If your answer is yes, please go on to item 30.

If your answer is no, please go on to item 41 on page 9.

30. How many times in the past five years have you purchased upholstered furniture?

- ☐ a. once
☐ b. twice
☐ c. three times
☐ d. four times
☐ e. five times
☐ f. more than five times, please specify _____

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PLEASE PUT A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH
BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR
DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

strongly
disagree
disagree
neutral
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strongly
agree
not applicable

31. Price is an important factor to consider when purchasing upholstered furniture.

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Durability of the upholstery fabric is an important factor to consider when purchasing upholstered furniture.

16

What upholstery fabrics are made from is an important factor to consider when purchasing upholstered furniture.

17

How upholstery fabrics can be cleaned is an important factor to consider when purchasing upholstered furniture.

18

Appearance is an important factor to consider when purchasing upholstered furniture.

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31a. What are some other features that you would consider when purchasing upholstered furniture?

32. When you started to consider buying the piece of upholstered furniture you last purchased, you looked around for general information about upholstered furniture by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ a. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
☐ b. going through retail store catalogues
☐ c. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
☐ d. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
☐ e. browsing through retail stores
☐ f. calling textile specialists for advice
☐ g. others, please specify _____
☐ h. did not look for such information

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33. The last time you purchased a piece of upholstered furniture, how many stores did you visit before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. one
☐ b. two
☐ c. three
☐ d. four
☐ e. five
☐ f. more than five, please specify _____

28

34a. Before the purchase of your last piece of upholstered furniture, did you try to find information about how durable upholstery fabrics would be before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer item 34b)
☐ b. no (please go on to item 36)

29

34b. You found out how durable upholstery fabrics would be by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
☐ iv. asking salesperson
☐ v. referring to your own experience with previous upholstered furniture you owned
☐ vi. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
☐ vii. calling textile specialists for advice
☐ viii. others, please specify _____

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35a. Before the purchase of your last piece of upholstered furniture, did you check the price range of upholstered furniture before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 35b)
☐ b. no (please go on to item 36)

38

35b. You found out the price range for upholstered furniture by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
☐ iv. asking salesperson
☐ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
☐ vi. browsing through stores
☐ vii. others, please specify _____

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36. How much did you pay for the last piece of upholstered furniture you bought?

- ☐ a. under \$150
☐ b. \$150 - \$349.99
☐ c. \$350 - \$549.99
☐ d. \$550 - \$749.99
☐ e. \$750 - \$949.99
☐ f. \$950 and over, please specify _____

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37. Did you consider the price you paid for your last piece of furniture was:

- ☐ a. higher than you expected to pay
☐ b. about the same as you expected to pay
☐ c. lower than you expected to pay

47

38a. Before the purchase of your last piece of upholstered furniture, did you try to find information about what upholstery fabrics are made from (i.e. fiber content such as nylon, polyester, etc.) before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 38b and 38c)
☐ b. no (please go on to item 39)

48

38b. What were your reasons for finding information about what upholstery fabrics are made from?

38c. You found out what upholstery fabrics are made from by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
☐ iv. asking salesperson
☐ v. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
☐ vi. calling textile specialists for advice
☐ vii. checking labels on the piece of furniture
☐ viii. referring to your own experience with upholstered furniture you previously purchased
☐ ix. others, please specify _____

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39a. Before your last purchase of upholstered furniture, did you try to find information on how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned before deciding which one to buy?

- ☐ a. yes (please answer 39b and 39c)
☐ b. no (please go on to item 40)

58

39b. What were your reasons for checking how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned?

39c. You found information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned by: (please check the ones you consulted)

- ☐ i. reading advertisements in newspapers or magazines
☐ ii. going through retail store catalogues
☐ iii. discussing with friends, relatives or neighbours
☐ iv. reading Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide
☐ v. calling textile specialists for advice
☐ vi. asking salesperson
☐ vii. referring to your own experience with upholstered furniture you previously owned
☐ viii. checking labels on the piece of furniture
☐ ix. others, please specify _____

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PLEASE INDICATE THE USEFULNESS OF DIFFERENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION BY PUTTING A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

40. Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about how durable upholstery fabrics will be.
- Retail store catalogues provide useful information about how durable upholstery fabrics will be.
- Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about how durable upholstery fabrics will be.
- Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about how durable upholstery fabrics will be.
- Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about price range for upholstered furniture.
- Retail store catalogues provide useful information about price range of upholstered furniture.
- Salespersons provide useful information about price range of upholstered furniture.
- Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about price range of upholstered furniture.
- Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about price range of upholstered furniture.
- Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about what upholstery fabrics are made from.
- Retail store catalogues provide useful information about what upholstery fabrics are made from.
- Salespersons provide useful information about what upholstery fabrics are made from.
- Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about what upholstery fabrics are made from.
- Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about what upholstery fabrics are made from.
- Advertisements in newspapers or magazines provide useful information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned.
- Retail store catalogues provide useful information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned.
- Salespersons provide useful information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned.
- Friends, relatives or neighbours provide useful information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned.
- Consumer Reports, Canadian Consumer or Consumer Buying Guide provide useful information about how upholstery fabrics can be cleaned.

PLEASE PUT A CHECK UNDER THE COLUMN WHICH BEST DESCRIBES HOW MUCH YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH EACH STATEMENT

41. If the fabric of a piece of upholstered furniture is treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be able to identify it readily.
42. If the fabric of a piece of upholstered furniture is treated with a flame-retardant finish, I would like to be informed about this special feature by:
- reading about it in newspaper or magazine advertisements
 - a symbol that represents flame-retardance printed on the package
 - a special label bearing a symbol that represents flame-retardance permanently attached to the piece of upholstered furniture
 - looking at displays of upholstered furniture with flame-retardant upholstery fabrics
 - reading materials, for example pamphlets, which explain the advantages and disadvantages of flame-retardant upholstery fabrics

strongly disagree disagree neutral agree strongly agree not applicable

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Card 4

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PART D.

43. Please check the income range that describes your total family income:

- ☐ a. under \$10,000
☐ b. \$10,000 - \$14,999
☐ c. \$15,000 - \$19,999
☐ d. \$20,000 - \$24,999
☐ e. \$25,000 - \$29,999
☐ f. \$30,000 - \$34,999
☐ g. \$35,000 - \$39,999
☐ h. \$40,000 and over

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44. Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?

- ☐ a. completed up to Grade 10
☐ b. completed high school
☐ c. technical college graduate (from a program which has at least a two-year duration)
☐ d. trade or business school
☐ e. bachelor's degree
☐ f. advanced degree
☐ g. others, please specify _____

18

45. Sex of respondent:

- ☐ a. male
☐ b. female

19

46. Do you live:

- ☐ in a city (please name _____)
☐ in a town (please name _____)
☐ in an incorporated village (please name _____)
☐ on a farm
☐ other (please specify _____)

20

APPENDIX III

EDUCATION										INCOME									
Blanket n=109					Drapery n=125					Blanket n=105					Drapery n=121				
χ^2	p				χ^2	p				χ^2	p				χ^2	p			
PRICE																			
Advertisements	0.34	0.56			0.00	1.00				0.42	0.81				0.26	0.88			
Catalogs	0.09	0.76			0.00	1.00				2.91	0.23				6.32	0.04*			
Friends	0.07	0.79			0.00	1.00				3.45	0.18				9.01	0.01*			
Salesperson	0.27	0.60			0.00	1.00				0.03	0.98				0.28	0.87			
Consumer Reports	0.57	0.45			1.31	0.25				4.13	0.13				1.02	0.60			
Browsing through stores	0.47	0.49			0.00	1.00				4.48	0.13				1.96	0.38			
QUALITY																			
Advertisements	0.01	0.93			0.66	0.42				1.43	0.49				1.18	0.55			
Catalogs	0.16	0.69			0.48	0.49				0.31	0.86				0.40	0.82			
Friends	1.42	0.23			0.14	0.71				0.16	0.92				1.39	0.50			
Salesperson	0.00	1.00			0.57	0.45				0.98	0.61				1.39	0.50			
Own Experience	0.00	1.00			2.40	0.12				0.30	0.86				2.05	0.36			
Consumer Reports	0.00	1.00			0.41	0.52				0.51	0.78				0.11	0.95			
Textile Specialist	0.00	1.00			0.31	0.58				2.83	0.24				0.04	0.98			
FIBER CONTENT																			
Advertisements	0.13	0.72			1.72	0.19				1.75	0.42				1.30	0.52			
Catalogs	0.05	0.83			2.44	0.12				2.77	0.25				1.10	0.58			
Friends	0.03	0.87			0.00	1.00				1.71	0.43				10.72	0.005*			
Salesperson	0.13	0.72			0.00	1.00				0.78	0.68				0.11	0.95			
Consumer Reports	0.44	0.51			0.03	0.86				0.48	0.79				0.09	0.96			
Textile Specialist	0.20	0.66			0.33	0.57				1.17	0.56				0.09	0.96			
Labels	0.07	0.80			0.06	0.80				2.19	0.33				6.17	0.05*			
Own Experience	0.18	0.67			0.18	0.67				3.14	0.21				6.19	0.05*			
CLEANING METHOD																			
Advertisements	0.00	1.00			0.00	1.00				0.74	0.69				0.42	0.81			
Catalogs	0.00	1.00			0.00	1.00				1.17	0.56				4.53	0.10			
Friends	0.13	0.72			0.02	0.88				0.76	0.68				8.14	0.02*			
Consumer Reports	0.12	0.73			1.75	0.19				1.17	0.56				1.96	0.38			
Textile Specialist	0.07	0.80			0.63	0.43				1.40	0.50				2.72	0.26			
Labels	0.49	0.49			0.15	0.70				1.40	0.50				0.72	0.70			
Salesperson	0.47	0.49			0.07	0.79				0.93	0.63				0.80	0.67			
Own Experience	0.51	0.48			0.45	0.50				4.67	0.10				2.70	0.26			

*p < 0.05

Appendix III
Association Between Education and Income of Buyers of
Different Products and Sources of Information